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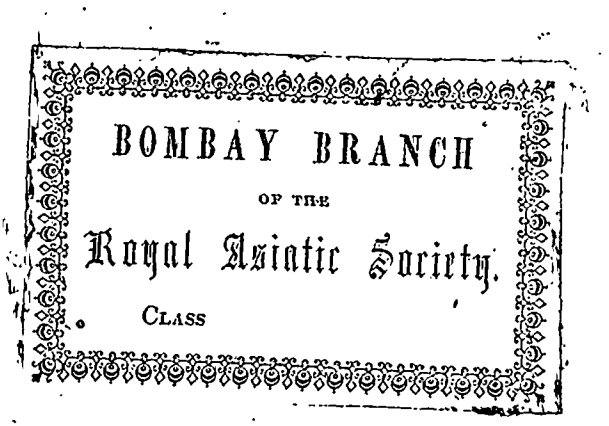

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THE

WORKS

OF

JOHN HOME, Esq.

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OF

JOHN HOME, Esq.

NOW FIRST COLLECTED.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

AN ACCOUNT

OF

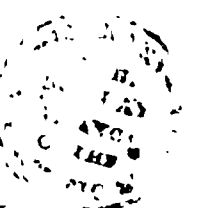
HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS.

BY

HENRY MACKENZIE, Esq. F. R. S. E.
&c. &c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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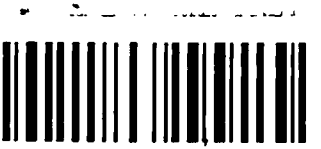
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THE

SIEGE OF AQUILEIA;

A

TRAGEDY.

———*Me non oracula certum*
Sed mors certa facit, pavido, fortique cadendum est:
Hoc satis est dixisse Jovem.

LUCAN.

PROLOGUE,

SPOKEN BY MR GARRICK.

When Philip's son led forth his warlike band,
To die, or conquer, in a distant land;
To fan the fire, a martial muse he chose;
From Homer's song a new Achilles rose!
When generous Athens her prime trophies won,
Vanquish'd Darius, and Darius' son,
The stage breathed war—the soldier's bosom burn'd,
And fiercer to the field each chief return'd:
Now, when the world resounds with loud alarms,
When victory sits plumed on Britain's arms,
Be war our theme: the hero's glorious toil,
And virtue springing from the iron soil!
Our scenes present a siege in story known;
Where magnanimity and valour shone:
If nature guides us, if the hand of truth
Draws the just portrait of a Roman youth,
Who, with the best and noblest passions fired,
In the same moment conquer'd and expired;
Perhaps your hearts may own the pictured woe,
And from a fonder source your sorrows flow:
Whilst warm remembrance aids the poet's strain,
And England weeps for English heroes slain.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ÆMILIUS, *Consul of Rome, and Governor of Aquileia.*

PAULUS, TITUS, } *Sons of the Consul.*

VARUS, DUMNORIX, } *Officers in the Army of Maximin.*

GARTHA, *A Numidian Officer in the Troops of Æmilius.*

Priest of Jupiter.

LUCIUS, *A Freedman.*

Officer, A Messenger.

CORNELIA, *Wife to the Consul.*

THE

SIEGE OF AQUILEIA.

ACT I.

SCENE,—*The Palace Court.*

Enter PAULUS *and* TITUS.

Paul. THIS is no time to strive for vain renown.
The fate of Rome, remember that, my brother!
Depends on the defence of Aquileia.

Titus. Paulus, I know.

Paul. But thou dost not consider
The importance of this war. We fight not now,
As oft since Freedom fell our fathers fought,
When Latian chiefs contended who should reign,
With half the Senate listed on each side;
The victor still was Roman, and revered
The gods and temples of immortal Rome.

But o'er yon mighty host that guards our walls,
Fierce Maximin commands; whether of Thrace,
Or wild Dalmatia, so obscure his birth,
Himself scarce knows; but sure barbarian born.
This savage soldier, nursed in blood and war,
Whom military frenzy hath set up
To trample on mankind, abhors a Roman;
And marks for death the noble and the brave.
His yoke, at last, the indignant senate scorns,
The slumb'ring genius of our country wakes,
And rouses slothful Italy to arms.
The furious tyrant from the frontier hastes,
Like a wild beast gall'd by the hunter's spear,
And, breathing vengeance, rushes upon Rome:
Here first opposed, tenfold his fury burns;
Here, in the pass of fate, our father stands,
Defies and stops the monster in his rage,
Till Rome's last legions come to give him battle.
Now, when a soldier's life is of such moment,
When destiny hangs on a single day,
To fight for glory, Titus, were a crime.

Titus. No, Paulus, no! it is not fame alone
That Titus seeks to purchase from the foe;
Though such a crime the gods and men would pardon.

I know the peril that o'er Rome impends,
And know the hated cause of all our ills,
That army, only brave against their country.
I mean to smite them, and their giant leader,
Whom nature for a gladiator form'd,
To be the sport, and not the lord, of Rome.
The blow once struck, our foe must raise the siege,
Or waste his veterans in vain attacks,
And give to Gordianus easy conquest.

Paul. Were this a frontier city far from Rome,
And yon huge host composed of foes remote,
German, or Parthian, I would say to thee,
Lead on, my brother! Shield to shield we'd go,
And fire yon turret, or together perish.
But now, when conquest by delay is gain'd,
When Aquileia guards the walls of Rome,
Dread of the great event has so possess'd me,
That, like the Persian soldier, I could stay
My arm uplifted, patient to the call
Of cautious duty.

Titus. And renouncing fame!
Oh, Paulus! you have gain'd long since the prize
That I contend for. Every martial palm
Thy sword hath won. When I, like thee, am great

In deeds of arms, like thee I may be wary.
Now to my brother I lay bare my breast:
This famous siege approaches to its end;
Whatever end the ruling gods ordain,
Yet no distinguish'd action graces me.
I've done my duty. That I reckon nothing;
The meanest soldier has not shrunk from duty;
Son of Æmilius, and thy brother, Paulus!
I must do more, and by the gods I will!
Here I have found a path that leads to glory;
Do not oppose me, else—we're friends no more.—
Our father comes. Speak not against my purpose,
And I shall move the Consul's noble mind.

Enter ÆMILIUS.

Æmil. Health to my sons!

Paul. and *Titus.* Heaven guard our father's life!

Æmil. And bless my children!—Ha! your looks are keen;
Your's chiefly, Titus! what hath stirr'd your spirit?
How points the enemy? This quiet night,
In preparation past, portends a storm.

Paul. On that attack which threats the eastern gate,

The enemy hath labour'd all night long,
Repairing what the river's rage had ruin'd.

Æmil. It was a friendly flood. The river god
With all his waters guards his native walls;
On that strong quarter they can ne'er prevail.
The north I fear, where yon stupendous tower
Our works commands.

Titus. It shall not long command,
Let but the Consul grant me my desire.

Æmil. What would my son?

Titus. Their tower is weakly guarded.
At break of day, a soldier from yon camp
Fled to my post; hollow and gaunt he was;
His shrivell'd limbs scarce bore his sounding arms.
Like him, he said, with toil and famine worn,
Were half the tyrant's host. For Maximin,
Mad with delay, and fiercer from repulse,
Reviles his soldiers, drives them to the trench
With whips and sharp reproach. This day, o'ercome
By strong necessity, he breathes a while,
And sends his legions forth to gather in
Whatever this exhausted region yields.
I saw the busy foragers, in troops,
March and disperse themselves on every side,

Like playful children on a summer day,
Secure and careless; for no martial band
Of late hath sallied from our guarded gates.
This is the time. Permit me, O my father!
Now to attack their ill defended lines,
And fire that mighty tower in which they trust.

Æmil. Well hast thou spoke, my son! thy zeal I love,
Nor must thy skill and judgment pass unpraised.
Be thus attentive still, and trust me, Titus,
In future sieges, and in other wars,
Swift execution shall thy purpose honour.

Titus. Ne'er shall I see another siege like this,
Ne'er draw my sword in such a glorious cause.
Alas, my lord! check not my spring of thought,
Nor nip the only bud it yet has borne.

Æmil. Riper occasions will thy valour claim.
Danger comes on; Typhæus-like it comes,
Whose fabled stature every hour increased.

Titus. O! judge not of the counsel by the weight
Of him that gives it. Would to heaven, my lord!
That I could now divest me of that youth
Which mars my credit. Chearfully I'd step
Far into age, to gain but for a day
The grave authority which years bestow.

Paulus. What brings the brave Numidian Gartha hither?

Enter GARTHA.

Gar. Hail to the General!

Æmil. Hail, valiant Gartha!
How has the morning past, where you command?

Gar. It has been busy. The presumptuous foe
In loose disorder'd squadrons ranged the fields.
I watch'd the time; and sudden as the blast
That rises in the desert, out we rush'd
And swept them from the plain. Safe in our speed
We urged the chace far as the rising ground,
And unmolested view'd the camp below.
This worthy of your notice I observed,
Their wond'rous tower, the work of many a day,
Stands now protected by a feeble guard.

Titus. Thanks for thy welcome tidings, noble Gartha!
The guardian gods of Rome bend from their skies,
And point this action out. Hear me, my father!
If ever since my birth I gave thee joy,
If e'er thou did'st, as parents oft are wont,
Interpret large the promise of my childhood,
O hear and grant my chief and dear request!

Let me go forth: be this my first exploit,
To wrap in fire the tyrant's boasted tower;
That Rome, who glories in the Æmilian line,
May join your Titus to his kindred names

Æmil. In thee the spirit of thy fathers speaks,
Or some superior power thy bosom fires,
Whom I oppose no more. Go, and fulfill
Thy destiny. Brave Gartha too shall add
His troops to thine. Prepare what else——

Titus. 'Tis done.
Destructive instruments and balls of fire
Are ready at the gate.

Æmil. Farewell, my son!
If you prevail, urge not too far your fortune.
Remember still my words; that when we meet,
I may have cause to praise thy conduct then,
As now thy courage, Titus.

Titus. Gartha, come!

[*Exeunt* TITUS *and* GARTHA.

Æmil. Paulus, lead thou thy legion to the gate,
And favour their retreat. It may be needful;
But mix not in the fight; for mighty cities
Have been by such temerity surprised.

Paul. Would that there was no Roman breast more prone

To rash attempts than mine! I wish, my lord,
That I had led, and Titus had sustain'd me.

Enter an Officer.

Off. Consul of Rome! this arrow, thus inscribed,
Fell on the green sloped bank, fast by my post;
And as it bears your name, myself have brought it.

[ÆMILIUS *reads.*

"In three days hence, even with the ides of June!
The Roman army comes to your relief.
Be sparing of your troops; protract the siege;
Thou art the shield of Rome and Gordianus."

Æmil. Soldier, return, and publish to the legions
The welcome tidings of a near relief.

Off. Gladly, my lord. Much have the troops endured,
And with unshaken constancy they suffer.

[*Exit Officer.*

Paul. Had this advice arrived ere Titus went,
I think he hardly had obtained permission.
Though Maximin should raise an hundred towers,
For three short days his fury we may scorn.

Æmil. Go, and prevent the sally. Tell thy brother

What the imperial mandate here contains.
It is the Emperor's command recalls him.
Paul. With pleasure I obey. [*Exit* PAULUS.
Æmil. (*alone.*) I must reserve
My sons, my soldiers, for a nobler service,
And in the battle aid the Roman arms.
The hour approaches that must give to Rome
A legal lord, by her own suffrage chosen,
Or fix a barb'rous master o'er mankind.
That barb'rous master I shall never own.
If I could stoop to drag the servile chain,
And live the vassal of a vile Dalmatian,
Yet I could not conceal me in the crowd
Of prostrate Romans; I that stood aloft,
And bore through Italy the senate's standard.
Fast by that standard will I plant my foot,
There with my boys a glorious conquest gain,
Or end at once the long Æmilian line.—
[CORNELIA *appears.*
Behold the only object that can shake
One moment my resolve! What will become
Of thee, Cornelia! doom'd perhaps to live,
Like Priam's wretched queen, the slave of those
By whom her sons, her husband—country, fell!

Enter CORNELIA *and Priest.*

Cor. Why is my lord alone? Where are my sons?

Æmil. This day, Cornelia, brings us welcome tidings.

The emperor approaches with his host.

Cor. Thanks to the gods! But say, where are my children?

Æmil. This instant I expect them to return.

Cor. From whence, Æmilius?

Æmil. From the northern gate.

Titus had form'd a brave, a great design;
But when assurance of relief arrived,
My Paulus hasten'd to recall his brother.

Cor. 'Tis as I fear'd. Paulus will come too late.
The omens of the gods must be fulfill'd.

Æmil. What evil omens has Cornelia seen?

Cor. 'Tis strange to tell; but, as I slumb'ring lay,
About that hour when glad Aurora springs
To chace the lagging shades, methought I was
In Rome, and full of peace the city seem'd;
My mind oblivious too had lost its care.

Serene I stepp'd along the lofty hall,
Embellish'd with the statues of our fathers,
When suddenly an universal groan
Issued at once from every marble breast.
Aghast I gazed around! when slowly down
From their high pedestals I saw descend
The murder'd Gracchi. Hand in hand, the brothers
Stalk'd towards me. As they approach'd more near,
They were no more the Gracchi, but my sons
Paulus and Titus. At that dreadful change
I shriek'd and waked. But never from my mind
The spectacle shall part. Their rueful eyes!
Their cheeks of stone! the look of death and woe!
So strange a vision ne'er from fancy rose.
The rest, my lord, this holy priest can tell.

Æmil. Why this is nothing but a common dream;
For often when the waking mind is charged
With apprehension of uncertain ills,
Imagination, in the hour of rest,
Presenteth wild fantastic combinations,
That have a shade and tincture of the past:
But 'tis the weakness of the human mind
That joins the vain assemblage to futurity.

Priest. Men reason thus, my lord, who think their reason
Can grasp and measure all; presumptuous thought!
Sounds more than human have been often heard,
And shapes celestial seen, by mortal man:
But yet most frequent in the silent night
Are warnings given by strange protentous dreams.
The history of mighty Rome abounds
In awful instances. The old republic
By them has oft been sway'd, and oft preserved.

Æmil. But tell me, Priest of Jove, what do the gods
By their more certain omens now declare?

Priest. Consul, with the most venerable rites
That our religion knows, I have perform'd
A sacrifice to Capitolian Jove,
This pious matron present: never yet,
Since at the altars of the gods I stood,
Did I behold such omens of calamity.
Yet they were intricate, ambiguous, dark;
And though some parts I might interpret fair,
Even these were mix'd and full of dire perplexity.
No further can I see into the cloud
That veils the will of heaven; but this I say,
And by the sceptre of the god I serve

It is the truth, some dreadful danger hangs
O'er thee thyself, this city, or thy race. [*Shout.*
Cor. Ha! what means that shout?
Æmil. It is a joyful shout.
Behold the cause: see where that dusky smoke
Darkens the air. And now the flame bursts out;
Their turret blazes, and my Titus conquers.
Cor. O heaven and earth! O son, too well beloved!
Why do these cruel omens check my joy?

Enter an Officer.

Off. Consul! your valiant son hath fired the tower;
But whilst he urged too far the flying foe,
A band, that lay conceal'd beyond the height,
Has gain'd the plain between him and the city.
Æmil. O rashly brave! whom I forewarn'd in vain.—
Retire, Cornelia, yet he may be rescued.—
Lucius.

Enter another Officer.

Luc. The northern gate unguarded stands:
For when brave Paulus saw his brother's peril,

He with his legion rush'd upon the foe,
And furious is the fight.

Cor. Both, both are lost!

Æmil. Unhappy youths! my steady Paulus too!
Where is our discipline, obedience where?—
I have no leisure now for words, Cornelia!
Implore the gods to guard you and your children.
[*Exit with his Attendants.*

Manent CORNELIA *and Priest.*

Cor. Perhaps ere this Cornelia has no children!
They both are fall'n into the fatal snare.
Tremendous oracle! too late reveal'd.

Priest. Abandon not thy soul to such despair;
The sword of war, devouring as it is,
Consumes not all. The destined number die,
And from the bloodiest field still some return.

Cor. My sons will ne'er return, I know them well.
The noble heart of Titus, if he lives,
This instant swells with grief, and pride, and shame.
Will he, the author of this fatal combat,
Forsake the soldiers whom he led to slaughter;
Return discomfited, and saved by flight,

To bear reproach, and blush in Aquileia?
He will not, holy Flamen! Nor will Paulus:
Calm as he is, and master of himself,
My generous Paulus will not leave his brother.
Alas! I never shall behold them more:
This is the evil that the gods foretold.
Ye constant matrons of Rome's former days!
Alas! I have no fortitude like yours.
Mine were no public cares. In the mild shade
Of sweet domestic happiness I lived,
Till this fierce tempest rose, the storm of war,
Whose rage hath burst on the Æmilian race.

Priest. Lady, retire. I to the walls will go,
And learn what has befall'n. Remember thou,
How oft, in human life, the great conclusion
Of fear'd and wish'd events mocks all conjecture.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE,—*A Court, &c. as before.*

Enter Priest.

Priest. Too soon thy omens are accomplish'd, Jove!
O wretched parents! O devoted race!

Enter LUCIUS.

Luc. Cornelia comes, impatient of thy stay.
Priest. How shall my tongue perform a faithful office,
And tell Cornelia what my eyes beheld?
Her sons I saw surrounded by the foe,
And their small troops seem'd like a bank of sand,
Which, by the flowing tide encompass'd round,
Each moment wastes and lessens to the view.
Their wretched father saw, and could not save them:
For full opposed to him the tyrant stood
With half his host embattled. Thrice Æmilius

Came to the front of his remaining troops,
As if he meant to rush upon the foe,
And thrice the Consul pull'd the father back:
Then looking down, and leaning on his sword,
The tears fast trickling down the warrior's cheeks,
He paused a while, and turn'd him to the city.

Enter CORNELIA.

Cor. Thou bring'st no comfort! Terror and dismay
Are written on thy brow! Haste, tell me, Flamen.

Priest. Behold a soldier bleeding from the field.

Enter GARTHA *wounded.*

Cor. 'Tis the Numidian chief!

Gar. Lady, these wounds,
Which bleed to death, make Gartha not ashamed
That he alone revisits Aquileia.
Involuntary messenger am I
Of tidings harsh to tell. My fiery steed,
Gall'd with an arrow, bore me from the plain,
Where still your valiant sons maintain the fight,
And with amazing actions fate suspend.
The boldest soldiers of the tyrant's host
Shrink from their rage. Lady, I speak with pain.

This to the Consul: I advised the sally,
And fell into the ambush. I rejoice
That I shall not survive it——

Priest. Help! he faints.

Gar. Oh! would I had fall'n at the feet of Titus!

Enter Attendants.

Priest. Support, and bear him hence.

Cor. O generous Gartha!
Too dearly hast thou proved thy constant faith.
[*Exit* GARTHA *supported.*
No more I hear the shouts of distant war,
'Tis horrid silence all. The work of death
Is over. Doubt and fear are at an end.
Now certain anguish and despair prevail.

Enter ÆMILIUS, *attended.*

Cor. My husband!

Æmil. Oh, Cornelia! wretched dame!
Look not to me; I bring no consolation.
I cannot comfort thee. I could not save
My children from destruction. Rigid duty
Made me spectator of their overthrow:
O fatal ensigns of unhappy power!

O had Æmilius been a poor centurion,
He might unheeded have forsook his station,
And perish'd with his children.

Cor. They are dead.

Paulus and Titus dead. Their mother lives!
Ye all-directing gods, whom we adore,
Whom I with spotless hands have ever served,
Is misery like this my just reward?
Your dearest gifts are to destruction turn'd.
Had I not been the fond, the happy mother
Of sons, for whom all mothers envy'd me,
I had not been above all women wretched.

Priest. Great are thy woes, Cornelia, great indeed!
Yet not infrequent in this changeful world
Are woes like thine; and greater still than thine.
The famous matron of thy name and blood,
The first Cornelia, saw her godlike sons
In Rome betray'd, and slain by Roman hands.
And oft in every age have wretched mothers
Survived their families, their country's ruin,
And lived sad captives in a foreign land:
No kindred ear to hear, no eye to weep
In pity of their woes: no human face
For them to look on, but the hateful face

Of foes, who made them childless, widows, slaves.
To thee remain thy husband, and thy country,
In whose defence thy sons so greatly died.
Thee Rome shall honour, and revere in thee
The sacred memory of her heroes slain.

Æmil. It is the right, the birthright, of our house,
For Rome to die: in every signal strife,
In every struggling period of the state,
My sires have bled. My sons have chose their time;
Bravely they fought, and nobly were they slain.
Rome still shall stand, though the Æmilii fall.
The tyrant's works are levell'd with the ground,
And his proud tower yet smokes upon the plain.
Our ramparts now his fierce assaults defy;
The Roman army, like a gather'd storm,
Rolls towards him. My sons shall be revenged;
My eyes shall see, my sword shall share the vengeance.

Cor. Meanwhile, unburied on the bloody field,
Amidst the common heap, my children lie.
Majestic Paulus, and my lovely Titus,
Is this the end of all your mother's care?
Some fierce barbarian now insults the dead;

Adding dishonest wounds. O! might not gold
Their dear remains redeem? Alas! alas!
'Tis the sole consolation I can hope for,
To save them from the beasts and birds of prey,
That howl and scream around these fatal walls;
To fold once more their bodies in my arms;
To lay them decent on the funeral pile,
And o'er their ashes pour a parent's heart.

Æmil. Mindful of that sad duty, I sent forth
A herald to the tyrant, and expect
Each moment his return. The trumpet sounds.

Enter Herald, with an Officer of MAXIMIN'S.

'Tis he, and with him one whose lofty port,
And splendid arms, bespeak his high command.

Cor. Forgive, O chief unknown, a mother's grief,
Which, short'ning the respect thy presence claims,
Hastes to inquire, if Maximin will give
The bodies of her children to the tomb?

Off. Far be its dismal honours from your offspring!
Lady, your valiant sons survive the field.

Cor. Are they not dead? Were not the Æmilii slain
On yonder field? Their father saw them fall.

Off. Faint with long fighting, and encompast round,
Opprest with numbers, and borne down they fell;
Not slain, nor greatly wounded. Captives now,
In their behalf, from Maximin I come.

Cor. O! sire of gods and men! eternal Jove!
For ever praised be thy protecting arm!

Off. Upon their father now depends their fate:
'Tis his to grant what Maximin requires.

Cor. Let his demands be boundless as the wish
Of avarice itself, they shall be granted.
Treasures there are from age to age preserved,
The acquisition of our frugal sires;
Well are the treasures of our house bestow'd,
If they redeem their lives who should possess them.

Off. It is not gold that Maximin requires.
To thee, Æmilius, I address my words:
Imperial Maximin, lord of mankind,
Charges the Senate and the Roman people
With breach of vows, and unprovoked rebellion;
But chiefly thee, who first withstood thy sovereign,
And stopt the progress of his just revenge.
The righteous gods, he saith, to thee averse,
Have made thy sons the captives of his arms;
Them he has doom'd to death, and will this day

The sentence execute, unless their father,
Before the sun shall set, give up the city.

Cor. Relentless tyrant! O all-seeing gods!
How dire a prospect opens to Cornelia!

Æmil. I stand not now in equal lists with Maximin,
Nor mean I here to plead the cause of Rome;
'Twould but offend thine ear. Yet tell thy lord,
He knows Æmilius not, and therefore wrongs him
By this unworthy trial of his faith:
Unhappy, most unhappy, he may make me,
But he and fortune cannot make me base.

Off. Is this the answer I must bear to Maximin?

Æmil. What other answer could he hope from me?

Off. Think of the consequence of this defiance.

Æmil. I'll meet it when it comes: now I must think
Of trust reposed in me by injured Rome.

Off. Stout are thy words. But will this pride of spirit
Sustain thee through the horrors that surround thee?
Thy lips have now pronounced thy children's doom,
Which executed, as it soon must be,

Will move the sternest soldier of our camp
To tender pity. Never yet were seen
So brave a pair as thy unhappy sons;
Nature on them has pour'd out all her gifts,
And drest their virtue in the fairest form.

Cor. O thou, whose tongue in Roman accents speaks,
Whose gentle aspect shews a mind humane!
Take pity on the most unhappy parents
That ever bore the name. This fatal day
Has proved too well the worth of these my sons,
Whom nature, though they less deserved, would love.
O! soften to the tyrant this refusal.—
I know not what to say; I have no right,
But that which signal misery confers,
To beg from thee assistance. If thou hast
At home an anxious mother, or sad spouse,
Who daily trembles for thy noble life,
Think of her state, and listen to Cornelia,
Whose tongue till now did never plead for favour.

Æmil. O gen'rous stranger! Our misfortunes touch
Thy manly mind.

Off. No stranger I: behold
A Roman, and a friend. This helmet off,
Perhaps Cornelia may remember Varus.
Cor. Varus! my friend! companion of my youth!
O heavy change of times! on other terms
In Rome, delightful Rome, we wont to meet.
Var. Most true, Cornelia.
Cor. And is Varus come
To aid the tyrant's arms against his country?
Come the fierce herald of his kinsmen's doom?
Var. With the same heart, the same unalter'd mind
To all that e'er he loved, is Varus come.
Æmil. Permit me, gallant Varus, still to claim
Thy friendship, though I stand the tyrant's foe.
Var. Æmilius! fortune rules the lives of men.
Had I been Consul, and possess'd in Rome
Of civil dignity; perhaps, like thee,
I should have arm'd me in the Senate's cause;
Whilst thou, a soldier on the distant frontier,
Perhaps, like me, hadst fought thy leader's quarrel.
The armies of the north acknowledge Maximin.
I lead the British legions to the war:

But more of this hereafter. Thou hast heard
My horrid message, and hast made such answer
As well becomes a Roman and a Consul.

Æmil. Barbarian as he is——forgive me, Varus!
He cannot mean this threat'ning to fulfil.

Var. O! trust not the humanity of Maximin.
If he's not cruel, why art thou in arms?
Besides, his temper, ever fierce and savage,
Is now incensed, enraged almost to madness,
By the wide-wasting havoc of this day.
His works are levell'd, his best legions thinn'd,
His nephew Algar slain by Titus' hand.
In the first transport of his furious wrath,
He did devote to the infernal gods,
And Algar's shade, the pris'ners of the field.
An old Ligurian, captain of his guards,
Stepp'd in and interposed this crafty counsel——
Your answer I will bear, but give it colours
That may denote the dawning of submission,
And so retard——

Enter an Officer.

Off. An herald from the camp
Requires the tribune forthwith to return:

Impatient Maximin stands on the plain,
Known by his purple, and gigantic stature.

Cor. Dreadful impatience! most inhuman rage!
By the dear sympathy of Roman blood,
Which in our veins from the same fountain flows,
Let me entreat thee, Varus, to appease
The angry tyrant. Represent Æmilius
Disposed to yield all that his honour can.
And if stern Maximin prefers revenge
To proffer'd gold, yet try if wealth can win
His friends and favourites to be more gentle.

Var. He has no friends nor favourites; from fear
His soldiers serve, his officers obey.
I must be gone, for Maximin brooks not
His orders slighted. Trust my zeal, Cornelia!
Had I but equal power, your sons were free,
Consul.

Æmil. Let me conduct thee to the gate,
And tell thee, as we go, what yet remains
Untold of our condition.

[*Exeunt* ÆMILIUS *and* VARUS.

Cor. Interpreter of heaven's mysterious will,
Augur revered! how will the evening close

Of this distressful day? Haste to repeat
The sacred rites, and prove thy art divine.

Priest. Such is my purpose, soon as Phœbus bows
From his meridian height. Lady, my mind
Has ponder'd Maximin's abhorr'd demand.
One only course there is to end the strife,
The dreadful strife of nature and of duty,
In great Æmilius' mind; and reconcile
The children's safety with the father's honour.

Cor. 'Tis that I wish for, but of that despair.

Priest. The Roman host, by Gordianus led,
In three days hence reach Aquileia's walls;
Their near approach to Maximin unknown.
Therefore the Consul, without breach of honour,
Without injustice to the Roman state,
May stipulate with Maximin, to yield
The city on the fourth returning day,
If not relieved. Ere that the chance of war
Raises the siege, or makes resistance vain.

Cor. Wise are thy words; and now the dawn of hope
Breaks on my darksome mind. Believe me, priest,
The loss of my dear sons in battle slain,
As once I thought them, was less terrible

Than the dire apprehension of that death
To which the tyrant dooms them; worse to me,
And worse, far worse to them. Alas, my sons!
Uncertain is your fate! who can foretel
The savage motions of the tyrant's will?
And yet this counsel seems the only means
Of preservation. Minister of heaven!
Let us retire, and at the altar bow
Of Jove eternal, who thy heart inspired. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

Enter ÆMILIUS; *and, from the other side of the stage,* LUCIUS.

Luc. To every post and station round the wall
Your orders have been borne. And each commander
With zeal obey'd.

Æmil. The soldiers' countenance,
How seems it, Lucius?

Luc. Determined to the death.
Strong indignation at their leader's fate,
With grief and pity, o'er their visage gleams;
But every passion settles to revenge.

Æmil. Lucius, 'tis well. See that my steed be led
Accouter'd to the gate. I know not, Lucius,
How soon I may bestride him. [*Exit* LUCIUS.

ÆMILIUS *alone.*

This distress[a]
Grows heavier every hour: like a green wound,
At first I felt it not; it rankles now.
Would I had listen'd to the urgent voice
Of nature, when she call'd me to the field!
Who could have blamed the passions of a father?
If Romë had blamed me, in the silent tomb
Her voice had not been heard.

Enter CORNELIA.

Cor. Why tarries Varus!

Æmil. He will return, Cornelia! doubt not that.
The tyrant knows the snare in which we're caught,
And to the uttermost will prove our souls
Before he breaks it.

Cor. By the gods inspired,
The priest hath found the means to set us free,
If you consent.

Æmil. If I consent? alas!
That doubt implies suspicion of the means.

Cor. Hear me, and judge: capitulate with Maximin,
In three days hence to yield up Aquileia,

If not relieved. Before that time expires,
The arms of Rome victorious raise the siege;
Or, if defeated, make resistance vain.
Bend not thine eye, Æmilius, on the ground!
The strictest law of duty is fulfill'd.
If thou reject'st this counsel, I will say,
Not Maximin the tyrant slew my children,
But their own cruel father.

Æmil. Oh, forbear!
My soul is rack'd; my heart asunder torn.
The eyes of all the world on me are fix'd;
Rome and mankind from me expect their fate.
I must consider this applauded counsel,
Ere I embrace.

Cor. This city is not Rome,
Nor your small garrison the Roman host.
A part, a little part, a very grain
Of public interest, in your mind outweighs
Your children, all your children. Oh, Æmilius!
Alike the father and the mother bear
The name of parent; but a parent's love
Lives only in the tender mother's heart.

Æmil. First let us learn what answer Varus brings.

Enter VARUS.

He comes, and various passions dim his face.

Cor. O! Varus, Varus!

Var. O! too just thy fears!

Of my loved kinsmen unrevoked the doom!
Varus hath kneel'd in vain. Hard as the rocks
Of wild Dalmatia is the tyrant's heart.
Incensed at the refusal which I bore,
His fury rages like a fire confined,
And threatens every quarter. Hear, Æmilius,
And tremble now for Rome, as for thy children!

Æmil. For Rome?

Var. The tyrant (lend me patience, heaven!
To speak with calmness, I who serve him still)
This day hath vowed to raze imperial Rome.

Æmil. Barbarian! why?

Var. To fix his wavering host,
To glut his legions with the mighty spoil.
Disease and famine prey upon his troops,
And rumour cries, that a relief is near.
The soldiers faint, and murmur at the length
And havock of this siege. The crafty tyrant
With sound of trumpet through his camp proclaim'd,

That he will give the city to be sack'd,
Raze her proud walls, and change the seat of empire.
The glad Barbarians shouted to the skies,
And mix'd with their applause unheard-of oaths
To die with Maximin.

Æmil. What said the Romans?

Var. In number few, and scatter'd through the bands,
They grieved, but carefully suppressed their sorrow.

Æmil. Was there no Roman near enough to plant
A dagger in the heart of Maximin?

Var. Before the tyrant reach the walls of Rome,
That Roman may be found.

Æmil. Above the name
Of god-like Scævola his fame shall rise.

Var. The righteous gods, whom Maximin contemns,
Have in their vengeance urged his frantic mind
By this decree to work his own perdition.
Long honour'd Rome! though thou hast lost so much
Of thy primæval splendour, still my heart

Thy image worships; still for thee I fought,
And from Siluria, to the savage shore
Of Caledonia, I thy trophies rear'd!
And shall thy soldier draw his sword against thee,
Or stand a tame spectator of thy fall?
No! I am thine, devoted, as of old
Thy darling sons, when first thy glory rose.
Nor shall thy turrets bow, imperial Rome!
Till low in dust the head of Varus lies.

Æmil. There spoke a Roman!

Cor. I rejoice to hear
The voice of Varus thus declare for Rome.
Her distant danger may thy arm avert!
But who defends my sons, whose sudden fate
This day decides?

Var. O were it possible
To gain a short delay! Time presses me;
For strong in troops and terrible is Maximin,
Nor am I yet prepared to rise in arms.
In a few days—nay, if the Roman host
Were near at hand——

Cor. My husband, speak!

Æmil. O, Varus!
The fates are merciful. Peruse these lines.

Var. "In three days hence." Then, tyrant, I
shall meet thee.
But what can sheath this day the naked sword?
Æmil. A truce I'll offer, bind myself by vow
(Nor is the practice new or strange in war)
Within a certain time to yield the city,
If not relieved; the time, this scroll directs,
The fourth revolving day.
Var. I see thine aim.
Ere that, the blow is struck by Gordianus;
Ere that shall Varus spread his Roman eagle,
And chace the raven of Dalmatia home.
Æmil. Thou think'st the tyrant will accept those
terms?
Var. I hold it certain: he can wish no more:
Unknown to him th' approach of Gordianus.
By Mars, the father of the Roman race,
Whose spear omnipotent in battle rules,
My life shall stand betwixt your sons and death.
Cor. Obest of friends! This is the work of heaven,
Whose awful purposes, unconscious man
Promotes, and fondly thinks he serves his own.
Thus from remotest Britain's frozen shore
The tyrant to his aid the warrior calls,
Who comes, a weapon in the hand of Jove,

To smite the proud usurper, and preserve
My children.

Æmil. Yea, his country and mankind.

Var. May the event these pleasing hopes fulfill!
I, that have been a soldier from my youth,
And fought out many a hard unequal conflict,
With tribes and nations who no mercy knew,
Yet never felt my bosom thus alarm'd.

Æmil. For us, for Rome, thy Roman mind is moved.

Var. In a new path I tread. I, that ne'er used
Dissimulation, must a while dissemble.
Soon may the hour of nobler action come!
When in the front of my brave troops I stand,
And dare the hateful tyrant with my sword,
My heart shall beat no more. My friends, farewell!

Cor. The gods protect thee, Varus!

Var. Consul, 'tis meet
You hold your troops prepared, and from the walls
Each motion watch, that rises in our camp.

Æmil. My vigilance shall equal the occasion.

[*Exit* VARUS.

'Tis, as thou said'st, indeed the hand of Heaven!
Ye powers supreme! who guide the line of fate,
Whose winding course eludes the sense of man,

Who could have thought that from our deep distress,
My sons' captivity, and threaten'd death,
Should spring the ruin of insulting Maximin?
Cor. Him, who contemns the gods, the gods will punish
Now or hereafter. To the altar I
Of Jove will hasten, and his power implore.
Here Lucius comes.

Enter LUCIUS.

Æmil. What tidings?
Luc. Good, my lord!
Far on the distant heights that close the vale,
The watchmen have descried a welcome sight;
Eagles and standards glittering in the sun,
Squadrons of horse that move along the hill.
Your faithful soldiers in loud shouts rejoice,
And hail the van of Gordianus' host.
Æmil. Too soon, great gods! they come.
Luc. Too soon, my lord!
That cannot be. In a most happy hour
Relief approaches. For in every street
Th' afflicted citizens exclaim against you,

And, as they pass, upbraid the patient soldier
For tame submission to your rigid will,
Which even your children's danger cannot bend.
Æmil. Would to the gods their murmurs and reproaches
Were all I had to bear!

Enter a Herald and an Officer from MAXIMIN.

Now bursts the storm.
Cor. This is not Varus. Sternly he comes on.
This is the dreadful harbinger of death.
Off. Consul! I come from Maximin; that prince,
Whose wrath is terrible, now burns with wrath
At thee, and sends me to denounce his vengeance.
He hath discover'd thy unworthy arts,
The fraudulent proposal of a truce,
When thou didst know the rebel host drew near.
Hither I come to cut all treaties short,
And to pronounce thy sons' immediate death,
Unless, without delay, thou yield'st this city,
Thyself, thy legions, freely to his mercy.
Æmil. A cruel message harshly thou deliver'st,
The dreadful echo of thy threat'ning lord.
He grows in his demands.

Off. 'Tis fit he should,
When basely dealt with: treachery still finds
Its due reward from him.
Æmil. Ha! who art thou,
Who dar'st presume thus to address the Consul?
Off. I am the slave of Maximin; if thou
Hast any other name, it is a worse one,—
Rebel, proud Roman!
Æmil. Thou'rt protected, slave!
Thy character is sacred; else—Barbarian!
Return to Maximin, the terms I sent
By Varus I adhere to, and expect
Another answer, by a gentler herald.
Cor. Thou art a Roman.—Wilt thou deign to tell
Thy name and country?
Off. Dumnorix my name,
My country Gaul.
Cor. And of Ligurian race,
Chief of the band Pretorian, art thou not?
Off. I am, and faithful to the prince I serve.
Cor. Faithful to evil, false to all that's good!
To nature and humanity a traitor;
Contriver of the murder of my children!

My soul by strong antipathy divined thee,
And shuddered at thee as her evil genius.

Æmil. Cornelia, beware! Thou wrong'st thyself,
Thus to expose to him thy wounded heart.

Off. Varus, your countryman, hath told you, lady,
What counsel I suggested to my prince.
This I expected from a Roman messenger,
Whose treachery his master soon shall know.
He told you true. From me the counsel came;
I thought the dames of Rome had loved their children. [*Exit* DUMNORIX.

Cor. My husband!—Oh!—what remedy, what hope?

Æmil. In Varus still I trust. The troops of Rome
Are near at hand. That insolent Ligurian
Hath chafed me to the height. O, awful Rome!
Where are thy honours? Queen of all the earth!
How art thou fallen! When a vile slave like this
Insults thy Consul, and decrees the doom
Of thy Patrician race! If this must be,
'Tis time to die; we all have lived too long.

Cor. I felt the insult, but my feeble anger

Blazed for a moment only. Other passions
Soon quench'd my indignation. O, my children!

Enter an Officer.

Off. To arms, my lord! The enemy comes on.

Æmil. We are prepared, for Maximin is known.
I look'd for this attack. Against what gate
Bend they their force?

Off. They threaten every gate;
For all their legions move. Distinct I saw
Three mighty columns shoaling to the plain,—
And in their front are carriages advanced
Loaded with beams and rafters, fit to frame
Some engine strong, against our batter'd walls.

Æmil. Be not afraid. [*To* CORNELIA.

[*A shout.*

What means that fearful cry?

Cor. A cry! it was a groan, a dreadful groan,
As if a multitude, a legion died.

Æmil. Farewell!

Cor. My lord, one moment stay, behold!

Enter LUCIUS.

Æmil. From whence that dismal cry?

Off. Alas, alas!
It was the people's voice, the soldiers' voice,
Lamenting for your sons.
Cor. Already, heaven!
Æmil. Say, what has befall'n?
Off. Still, my lord, they live:
But on the verge of death the brothers stand.
Cor. Still they live!
Æmil. Uninterrupted now relate,
Without a comment, what thy eyes have seen.
Off. The host of Maximin for fight array'd,
In three huge columns onward slowly moved,
And when their van had reach'd the little hill,
From whence the fountain springs, fast by the wall
The army halted: then appear'd a band,
Busy artificers, who rear'd, in haste,
A pile we wonder'd at; but soon was changed
Our wonder into sorrow, when we knew
It was a scaffold; and beheld your sons,
Guarded and bound, draw near. That spectacle
Produced the cry.
Cor. O! insupportable!
My lord! my husband! oh!
Æmil. Matron, retire,
And hide thy anguish from the common eye.

Cor. Ha! whither dost thou go?

Æmil. Straight to the gate.

Cor. Where thou art, I will be. I cannot leave thee.

Have mercy upon me, your sons, yourself,
And to necessity a little yield;
Entreat a short delay, new terms propound,
Let not your children die.

Æmil. Think'st thou thy sons
Will chuse a life bought by their father's shame?
If right my soul divines of both my boys,
What they dread most this instant, is to live,
Redeem'd inglorious with my honour lost.

Cor. I am encompass'd; on a pointed rock
I stand, a dreadful gulph on either side.

Æmil. The time is not expired; some hours the sun
Hath yet to fall; this awful preparation
Is meant to terrify and shake my soul,
That I may bow before the next demand.
Go to the palace; when a message comes
From the fell tyrant, thou shalt hear it answer'd.

Cor. Deal not, my lord, deceitfully with me.
I have a right, a mother's right.

Æmil. Be calm,
Let me conjure thee by the sacred names
Of thy great ancestors, who died for Rome.
Remember them, and prove thyself their daughter.

[*Exit* ÆMILIUS.

CORNELIA *alone.*

My ancestors! alas! ill-omen'd names!
Ye shades of heroes, o'er the world renown'd
For virtue, and for great misfortunes famed!
Why should I think of you, but to confirm
The dire presage that rises from my heart?
Your matchless worth exempted not from ills,
But was the cause recorded of your ruin.
Sprung from your blood, I fear that I am born
Heir to the fortunes of the fated line.

[*Exit* CORNELIA.

ACT IV.

Enter LUCIUS.

Luc. I will report the truth; too visible
Is the sad object from our crowded walls.
Unhappy mother! whom excess of anguish
Drives to pursue additional distress!
O! good and great Æmilius! how my soul
Is grieved for thee, and for thy valiant sons,
Whom I so oft have carried in my arms!
My generous master made me free in vain;
Still I remain'd a voluntary slave,
Preferr'd his service in a foreign land,
To sweet Larissa, and my native shore.
My only son, under his roof brought forth,
Born on the day that gave young Titus birth,
Bred up with him in every Roman art,
Unlike the rudeness of our simple land,
Wild with despair, vows he will not outlive
His dear, dear lord! his kind, his noble master.

Enter CORNELIA.

Cor. Calamity comes on me like a torrent,
And overwhelms a mind not used to woe.—
Ha! Lucius, hast thou seen my hapless sons?
Say, can I view them from the adjacent wall?

Luc. Too well, alas! conspicuous they stand.

Cor. Lucius, lead on.

Luc. Reluctant I obey.
I fear the transports of a mother's mind.

Cor. I will behold them; I will see my children,
Whate'er befall me; I will gaze upon them,
Though frantic madness should my soul surprise:
All lesser fears are in a greater lost.
Haste and conduct me.

Luc. The sad spectacle
Is near at hand.

Cor. O! feeble limbs that fail,
And weakly serve the strength of my despair!

Luc. 'Tis nature shrinks. O, lady! yet be warn'd.

Cor. No; if my wretched limbs refuse their office,
The arms of slaves shall bear me to the wall.
I'm firmer now; proceed.

Luc. The herald comes.

Cor. The last of heralds; but I will not tarry.

[*Exeunt* CORNELIA *and* LUCIUS.

Enter Herald and VARUS.

Var. This is the place appointed by the Consul;
Find, and inform him quickly of my presence.

[*Exit Herald.*

VARUS *alone.*

They must not die. It were a deed to strike
Horror from pole to pole. The Parthian fierce,
And the wild Moor, would tremble at the tale,
And mark accurst the pale of Roman empire.
Tyrant, too savage over beasts to rule!
Fidelity to thee were horrid treason,
To human nature, to the gracious gods,
Who o'er distrest humanity preside.
This day has full display'd the tyrant's soul,
And ripen'd thoughts long growing in my breast.
'Tis vain to think of ancient freedom now;
The Senate and the People are no more.
Rome's vast dominions for the sceptre call;
The world subdued, one master must command.
But let us have a monarch, not a tyrant.

Enter ÆMILIUS.

Æmil. Varus return'd! can Maximin relent?

Var. Never! his rage would stab the hoary priest
Before the altar. Hardly have I gain'd
This last renewal of the first conditions.

Æmil. Where is the host of Rome?

Var. Far distant still.
Those squadrons, that in evil hour alarm'd
The tyrant, and defeated our design,
The zeal of Gordianus had advanced
To cheer your troops, with promise of relief.

Æmil. 'Tis fate o'erwhelms us. To the tyrant bear
My first and latest answer. With delight,
With transport, I would die to save my sons;
But will not save them by an act of baseness.

Var. With fortitude, with dignity, Æmilius,
Thou hast sustain'd this cruel shock of fortune,
And justified the sentiments of Rome,
That placed her sovereign confidence in thee.
Now hear the counsel of a faithful friend,
Anxious for thee, and zealous for his country.

Æmil. No vain desire of glory rules my breast;

I feel the throbs of nature: all I wish
Is to be just to Rome; I envy not,
Nor emulate, the older Brutus' fame.'

Var. The proffer'd terms accept, and save thy children.

Rome shall not suffer: when her troops draw near,
I will forsake the tyrant's shatter'd side,
And fix the fortune of the future field.

Æmil. Compassion dictates this delusive counsel,
Thy pity for a miserable father;
But chance may mar thy generous design,
And deep dismay for Aquileia lost,
Confound the legions that contend for Rome.
Then whither shall forlorn Æmilius fly?
Where shall he hide him from reproach and shame?
What joy, what comfort, will his children yield,
When he and they with infamy must dwell,—
A new companion to our noble race!
No! rather let the blow tremendous fall,
And crush us in the path our fathers trode.
I see the image of my bleeding country:
I hear the voice of Rome her Consul call;
The chosen guardian in her last extreme.
City of gods! mother of heroes famed

Like gods of old! shall I abandon thee,
For whom so many noble youths have died,
So many fathers?—

Enter CORNELIA.

Now, my heart, be firm.

Cor. Where is Æmilius? the hard-hearted father,
Who whets the tyrant's sword against his children!

Æmil. Alas, Cornelia!

Cor. I have seen my sons,
Both bound with chains: I saw the deadly axe,
And the stern villain standing by their side.
Consul, I kneel to thee! O hear thy wife!
Hear me, my husband, whilst I yet have sense
And reason left to regulate my words.
O drive me not to madness, to despair;
Already wavering on the brink I stand,
In agony extreme.

Æmil. Trust in the gods;
They sooth the agonies of guiltless woe,
But to despair resign the self-condemn'd.
O my beloved wife, do not assail
Thy husband's soul, that labours to be just.

Heaven knows how dear to my afflicted heart
Thou, and the pledges of our virtuous love,
Have ever been; more dear than ever now.
But if their danger, and thy fears, should bend
My yielding mind to baseness and to shame,
Remorse would break the concord of our love,
And hate succeed to criminal affection.

Cor. Me only hate; acquit thy noble sons,
Too like thyself; Æmilius, hadst thou seen
Thy sons, as I beheld them from the ramparts!
With head erect, and high, my Paulus stood.
I knew his stature eminent; unmoved,
And stedfast was his gesture; firm he seem'd,
Like a strong castle on its rocky base.
The port of Titus shew'd a mind less calm.
Around he look'd, and from his scornful eyes,
Threw on his foes defiance and disdain.
At last in earnest speech the brothers join'd.
I saw them whisper: Paulus bow'd his head.
The multitude, long silent at my presence,
Lamented then; the weeping mothers clasp'd
Their infants to their breasts, and look'd at me.
I left the walls, to find thee out, my husband!
And lead thee thither, that thou might'st relent.

Æmil. Relent, Cornelia! O eternal powers,
That see the anguish of my tortured soul,
Sustain me still; let not my duty yield
To the strong yearning of a father's heart!

Cor. Why speaks not Varus? Has he too conspired
Against me and my children?

Var. I have spoke,
And told the Consul, that his sons may live,
And Roman arms o'er Maximin prevail.

Cor. What would'st thou more? inexorable man!

Var. I see the bottom of thy troubled mind,
And in this awful hour revere thy virtue,
Which stands aloof, and trembles at dishonour.
But hear this new addition to my counsel:
Soldiers I have, in every danger tried,
Bred to hard service in our British wars,
Accustom'd to explore the forests wild,
Alone, amidst the perils of the night,
And mingle fearless with the savage foes,
Disguised in their attire and uncouth arms.
Of those the most expert, I will dispatch,
That Gordianus may his arms advance.

Enter an Officer.

Off. My lord, your son approaches.

Cor. Ha, my son!

Off. Titus, your son, attended by a herald,
Slow through the gazing multitude proceeds,
Who weep and bless him.

Æmil. Ha! what change is this?

Off. The herald as he passes, scatters gladness,
Saying that Titus comes to end the war,
And to compassion move his father's mind.

Æmil. Titus! does Titus come to plead compassion?
Now, destiny, thou tramplest down Æmilius!—
Go tell him, herald, that I will not see him;
Let him not come to hear me curse the hour
That made me father of a son like him.

Cor. Judge not so rashly; see and hear thy son.

Æmil. Mention him not; that father has my envy
Who mourneth o'er his sons in battle slain.
Short-sighted mortals! Let no man repine
When fate bereaves him of the child he loves;
Amidst his anguish let him think of mine,
And that will comfort him.

Cor. This is not well,
Nor like my son; yet valour cannot change
Its quality so quickly. He hath proved
His dauntless courage. Death in terror clad
Could not dismay him. But his noble mind
Is sway'd by pity of his brother's fate,
In his involved.

Enter TITUS.

Æmil. Gods! unabash'd he seems,
Nor at his most inglorious purpose blushes.
[ÆMILIUS *turns from him.*
Cor. Dear to thy mother still!
Titus. Turn not away, [*To his father.*
Nor hold thy Titus of one look unworthy.
Æmil. Art thou my Titus? Thou that fear'st to die,
And comes a servile suppliant for life,
With coward prayers to seduce the Consul?
No! thou art not my son. I had a son!
Whose only fault was valour to excess,
Whose fatal courage was the source of ills
Which he was bound in honour to sustain.
Thou art not he! thou scandal to thy country!
Thou tool of Maximin!

Titus. Wrong not thy son.
Fast roll the number'd moments of my life,
And I must hasten to redeem my fame.
Cor. I fear, but know not what his words portend.
Titus. I have deceived the tyrant, and am come
No messenger nor counsellor of shame.
The cause of honour, of my father's honour,
The cause of Rome against myself I plead,
And in my voice the noble Paulus speaks.
Let no man pity us; aloft we stand
On a high theatre, objects I think
Of admiration and of envy rather.
The tyrant and his menaced deaths we scorn,
The cheerful victims of our sacred country.
Æmil. Hear this! O earth and heaven! my son, my pride!
Come to thy father's arms; now, now I know
My blood again. O bitter pleasing hour!
For I must lose thee, lose thee, O my hero!
Now when I love thee best, and most admire.
Cor. Preserve that virtue which you thus admire!
My son! my husband! Varus, pity me.
Titus. This to prevent I came; the force I fear'd
Of strong affection, and a mother's tears.

We saw the busy heralds come and go,
And trembled lest the Consul might be won;
For ebbing resolution ne'er returns,
But still falls farther from its former shore.
To aid my father in his trying hour
Did I assume a dastard's vile disguise.

Æmil. And did I meet you with reproach and anger!
With scorn encounter my devoted son,
Who came to strengthen and support his sire?
Forgive me, last of the Æmilian line!
Pure and unstain'd the current of our blood
Ends as it long has flow'd.

Cor. O Varus! speak:
Tell them, thou guardian angel of thy country!
That Rome does not the sacrifice demand.
Why should they die in vain?

Var. Thou noble youth,
Whose life more and more precious still I deem,
I am the friend of Rome; of yonder host
No slender part under my ensigns move.
With them I watch the tyrant's overthrow,
And guard my country with a stronger power,
Than Aquileia, and her feeble walls.
Great is thy glory, thou hast reach'd the top

Of magnanimity, in bloom of youth
The Regulus revived of ancient Rome:
Inflexible to terror, yield to prudence,
No tongue shall tax thine or thy father's fame.

Titus. Renowned Varus! often have I heard
Of thee, and of thy virtues; oft rejoiced,
That I could claim affinity with them;
But not the sanction of thy honour'd voice,
Not all the credence due to worth like thine,
Can move my stedfast mind. There is but one,
One only path which mortals safely tread,
The sacred path of rectitude and truth.
I follow, though it leads me to the tomb.
Forgive me, noble Roman! o'er thy head,
Perhaps, this instant dire discovery hangs,
And thou and Rome are lost, and basely lost.
No, let the Consul, as he ought, defy
The tyrant's threat'ning, and rely on heaven.
For me, and Paulus too, our hearts are fix'd,
Deliberation of our state is vain:
For if the Consul should the city yield,
Inevitable death abides his sons.

Cor. Eternal gods! thy mystic words explain.

Titus. A solemn oath determined we have sworn,
Ne'er to survive the ignominious ransom.

Restored to liberty, to death we fly,
And perish mutual by each other's sword.
Æmil. Immortal gods! who gave me sons like these,
Forsake them not, but guard your work divine.
Cor. My best beloved! my darling! my fond heart
Bleeds tenderness for thee. But there is something
So awful and so great, a glory round thee,
Which dazzles and o'erwhelms me. O my son!
Is life a burden? Lovest thou not thy parents?
Who for the love of thee would gladly die.
Titus. Think not, O best of mothers, best of women,
That with unfilial arrogance I speak.
My heart is full this instant of affection,
Hard to suppress. Dear to my soul are those
I leave behind, bitter to me their sorrows.
But destiny supreme hath mark'd my way:
And I accept what honour cannot shun.
By trivial accident, by various ills
Fatal to man, thou might'st have lost thy sons,
And they in dark oblivion would have slept:
But now I see the goal that Jove assigns,
And glory terminates our short career.

Be this thy comfort; I avow it mine.
Admired and mourn'd by Rome, for Rome we die.
Of fate secure, immortal is our fame,
And spotless laurels deck thy children's tomb.

Cor. Mysterious powers! how strange is my distress!
Thy virtue, Titus, rends thy mother's heart!
Even now the grandeur of thy tow'ring soul
Exalts my humbler mind to thoughts like thine:
But when thou goest, alas! I sink again,
Like the weak Pythian when her god has left her.

Titus. My father!

Æmil. O! my son, thou art the judge
And arbiter of fate.—Time, rapid fly,
And bring a joyful victory to Rome!
Let me but see the scale of combat turn'd,
And die in glad assurance of her safety.

Var. The hero's fire invades my secret soul:
Like his my bosom burns. You shall not die,
[*To* TITUS.
Unaided and alone. Perhaps the gods!—
I know not that; but I will raise a pile
Of glorious ruin. Shine, ye stars of Rome!
First in the column stand my British bands.
[*To* ÆMILIUS.

Prepare your squadrons, and protract the time
Of his return.

Enter Priest of JUPITER, *and the younger* LUCIUS.

Priest. Consul of mighty Rome!
Firm be the purpose of the present hour.
The sire of gods a happy sign hath given:
Trust in the aid of heaven's eternal King,
His adamantine ægis Jove extends.

Var. Romans and friends, farewell! Undaunted Titus,
I go to aid thee too with mortal arms.

[*Exit* VARUS.

Titus. Deem me not impious, servant of the gods!
Thee, and thy sacred office, I revere;
But signs and omens may our thoughts deceive.
Men may mistake the purposes of heaven;
The shield of Jove guards not the brave man's life,
Nor wards his body from the mortal blow.
A shield there is, that never can be pierced,
The heavenly armour of a mind resolved.
That mail who wears against all force is clad,
And triumphs o'er the fate by which he falls.

Enter Officer.

Off. My lords! th' assembled citizens demand
An audience.

Æmil. Tell them, No. It will require
My presence to appease their fearful clamour.
Retire, my son, and, till the herald comes,
A sad but dear society enjoy. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

The trumpets sound.

Enter TITUS, CORNELIA, *and* ÆMILIUS.

Titus. For me the trumpet sounds.
Cor. O dreadful sound!
Titus. The hour is come.
Cor. Alas! not yet, my son!
To the last moment stay.' So Varus counsell'd.
Titus. The herald's at the gate. I must not stay,
Nor linger, like a criminal opprest
With shameful fears. Farewell, my sire, farewell!
Cor. Thou goest to die, and say'st thou but farewell?
It were too little, if from Rome thou went'st
A sportful journey to the Baian shore.
But thou art going never to return,
To the dark region.

Titus. Where all men have gone:
Where all must go; but glorious is the path
Thy offspring tread. An honourable death
Is the sole gift which fate cannot resume.
Methinks it suits us not thus to discourse:
Combat thy grief, and make our parting noble.

Cor. Nature forbids! I cannot conquer nature.
Speak not so firm, look not so unconcern'd:
Leave in thy mother's ear some tender words,
Fit for eternal memory.

Titus. If thou lovest,
O spare thy son, lest Maximin should think
He has subdued me. No. He shall not see
Upon my cheek the vestige of a tear.

Æmil. Thy spirit shall inspire thy father's soul,
Till to the shades he sinks to meet thee there:
Then to the founders of immortal Rome
I'll point my heroes.—To my Paulus this,
[*Embraces.*
And now, farewell.

Cor. Alas! thy sire despairs,
He quits thy hand; till now I ne'er despair'd.
The moment is arrived, the dreadful moment,
I durst not think of, and cannot endure.

O Titus, Titus! let me clasp thy neck.
My son! those eyes I never shall behold
In living lustre more.

Enter LUCIUS.

Luc. Strife and confusion
Reign in the tyrant's camp. Himself I saw
Leap from his high tribunal.

Æmil. Sound th' alarm.
This is the work of Varus.

Titus. Consul, beware.
Hostility from thee is breach of faith,
Whilst I remain.

Æmil. Too true, my son! Begone,
And free thy father's sword. [*Embraces him.*

Cor. He shall not go.
One instant saves him, keeps him from the storm.
My arms have strength enough to hold my son,
My only left, for now his brother dies.

Titus. Nothing shall hold me. I have deeply sworn,
And left my brother pledge of my return;
Left him, to bear alone the tyrant's rage,
To die by torture, if I break my faith.

Thus wouldst thou buy my life! Unhand me streight,
Or I must tear myself——
Æmil. Thy frenzy, woman,
Cuts off our last resource, adds shame to ruin;
I will not, cannot succour noble Varus,
And much-wrong'd Paulus, till thou sett'st him free.
The clamour ceases. Oh! what hast thou done?
Cor. There, let him go, and perish with his brother.
Forgive this action; for excess of anguish
Deprives Cornelia of her reason's aid.
Now comes the raven that still bodes my woe.

Enter Herald and DUMNORIX.

Dum. Captive, the time's expired.
Titus. Soldier, 'tis well.
Turn to the gate thy steps. I follow thee.
Dum. Thou art the first that e'er employ'd deceit
Against himself; thy artifice prevails.
[*To* ÆMILIUS.
Roman! once more, though not from love, I speak;
Yield thee, for now thou hast no hope in Varus.

Æmil. Who told thee, that my resolution stood
On such a hope? What hath befallen Varus?

Dum. His treason is detected; he himself
Seized, and condemn'd with thy rash sons to die.

Cor. Eternal Gods!—How did the legions brook
Their valiant leader's fate?

Dum. Her tongue betrays
Your secret expectation of revolt,
Where all is calm submission. Varus came
From hence, entrusted with your last resolve,
And, like an orator, addrest himself
To the tribunal, with a voice so raised,
That every soldier in the circle heard;
And as he told a tale to move their pity,
A sudden murmur rose. The emperor
Leapt from his throne, and call'd aloud to seize
The artful traitor. Soon his guards obey'd.

Æmil. Varus, the noble Varus, too must die.
But there are gods above! Vengeance is theirs,
The tyrant yet shall feel.

Cor. Will vengeance raise
My children from the tomb?

Dum. Thou question'st well.
Matron, I pity thee. Canst thou not move

Thy husband's heart to spare his dying sons,
Nor win thy children to consent to live?

Cor. Thou pity me! thou, whose inhuman soul
Devised the counsel that has caused my woe!
In vain dost thou attempt my troubled mind;
Had I a magic voice, to cleave the earth,
To pluck the sun and moon from their high sphere,
Unmoved my husband and my sons would hear me.

Titus. This ineffectual conference I'll end.

[*To* DUMNORIX.

'Tis not your office, sir, to counsel here.
Conduct me to the camp.

Dum. I will, be sure.
The death that thou hast courted, now abides thee:
Come, try the rough embrace.

Titus. Lead on, Ligurian!
I answer to thy lord. [*Going.*

Cor. Titus, my son!—
Break, break, my heart, for I can bear no more.

[*Swoons.*

Titus. She faints, support her; now let me escape
From her affliction: think of Rome, my father!

[*Exit.* CORNELIA *is carried off.*

Manet ÆMILIUS.

Æmil. Of Rome! ay, and of thee, of thee, my son,
And of thy brother. O unequall'd pair,
Your deeds, your destiny have raised your sire
Above the pitch of man. My heart is steel,
I weep not, nor complain. Relentless fiend,
Inhuman Maximin! for thee I live;
To bury in thy hated breast my sword,
Then die upon the blow.

Enter LUCIUS.

Luc. Thy faithful slave,
Uncall'd, intrudes upon his master's woe.
Resign not to despair thy noble mind,
Still there is hope.

Æmil. Affectionate old man!
Thou speak'st thy earnest wish; but my frail hopes
Were wreck'd with Varus.

Luc. Oft when wisdom fails,
Chance interposes, and achieves the deed.
The British legions, wheeling from their host,

An angry parley with the tyrant hold,
And every rank re-echoes Varus' name.
Æmil. Immortal gods! Would I were at their head.
A single spark may kindle up the flame.
Luc. My son, devoted to his master's fate,
Arm'd like a soldier of the tyrant's guard,
Mix'd with the herald's train.
Æmil. O generous youth!
Perhaps——but I have nourish'd hope too much.
He who divests him of that constancy
Which stands in expectation of the worst,
Encounters fortune with a naked breast.
I will do so no more. Now I go forth
Less credulous of what my soul desires,
But not remiss to seize on swift occasion,
And urge it to the utmost. Lucius, stay
And tell Cornelia—she has no support,
No medicine, but hope—I'll to the gate.
[*Exit* ÆMILIUS.

Manet LUCIUS.

Luc. O best of men, I know where thou wilt go;
The first alarm provokes thee to the field;

One fate abides the children, and their sire.
Tyrannic Fortune! when thou raisest up
To envied eminence the sons of men,
Thou but preparest a triumph for thyself,
A second triumph from their grievous fall.
Alike the column, and its ruins, mark
Thy sovereign sway. Now Lucius will obey
Thy orders, lord; then hasten to thy side;
The humble shrub shall with the cedar fall.

[CORNELIA *behind the Scene.*

Cor. Stand off!

Luc. Cornelia's voice; it sounds of woe.

Enter CORNELIA, *followed by her woman.*

Cor. Stand off, I say, and let me find my husband!
Fit mate for me; for me, whose eyes have seen
The murder of my child.

Luc. Alas, alas!
The blow at last hath fall'n?

Cor. His streaming blood
I saw.

Luc. His blood! whom has the tyrant spared!

Cor. None, Lucius, none. I tarried not to see

A second stroke. Oh, lead me to my husband!

Luc. He guards the gate.
But hark his trumpets sound,

[*Sound of Trumpets.*

And sound a charge. Lady, my son went forth
To rouse the British legions to defend
Their leader, and thy sons. That sound proclaims
Tumult and war are up. My lord is there. [*Exit.*

Manent CORNELIA *and Attendants.*

Cor. The frantic father rushes to revenge
His sons, or throw the load of life away.
The desolate Cornelia!—she remains,
Her children murder'd, and her husband slain.

Enter Priest.

Where are thy omens, thy predictions too,
Thou priest of falsehood!

Priest. Know 'twas Varus fell,
And not thy son; his fall the signal proved
Of instant battle. With a whirlwind's rage
His legions rush'd upon the tyrant's guard;
Thy valiant sons are free, and lead the fight.

Cor. Can this be truth? Shall I again believe,

And wake me from the dreadful dream of death
That had possest my soul?

Priest. Matron! thy sons,
Thy husband too, victorious shall return.
I saw the bird of Jove his wings extend,
And hover o'er their battle; still he bears
Upon his pinions conquest.

Cor. Say'st thou so!
Then heaven and thou forgive me. Jove supreme!
If I have aught offended, on my head,
On mine alone, let all thy wrath descend:
But spare my sons, and spare their blameless sire.

Enter LUCIUS.

Luc. Lady, rejoice, the tyrant is no more;
His barbarous cohorts yield.

Cor. Blest be thy tongue!
But tell me of my sons, and of their father?

Luc. With voice and hand they urge the fainting foe,
Whose courage with their furious leader died.
Long, like a mound against the raging main,
Stood Maximin, the bulwark of his host;
His strength defied the fury of the storm;

Till to the van resistless Titus came.
By Titus' noble arm the giant fell,
And o'er him rush'd the war.

Cor. Not without crush
And havoc round him, such a ruin fell.—
O minister of heaven! why dost thou bend
Thine eye on empty space, and gaze on air?
Canst thou descry the future, or perceive
Events accomplish'd, though unknown?

Priest. 'Tis done.
The weary sisters rest. Cyllenius comes,
Like a bright meteor streaming down the vault
Of azure heaven; in his right hand the rod,
And in his left, a laurel dropping blood.
Behold!

Enter ÆMILIUS, *attended.*

Cor. My husband! oh! Where hast thou left
Thy sons?——

Æmil. They come victorious from the field.

Cor. Why dost thou faintly speak such welcome tidings?
Thou art not wounded?

Æmil. No.

Cor. From whence that cloud
Which overcasts thy brow? What damps thy joy?
Tell me, Æmilius! for I read thy soul,
There undivulged some cruel evil lies.

Æmil. Alas!

Cor. Thou sigh'st not thus for Varus lost.
My sons, thou say'st, draw near; what is the grief
That wrings thy heart?

Æmil. O summon to thine aid
What constancy thou hast; soon shalt thou see
What I would not relate.

Cor. Ha! am I mock'd
With false reports?
What spectacle is this!

Enter TITUS *wounded, and supported by* PAULUS *and Soldiers.*

Are these the victors! Oh, my Titus dies!

Titus. I stood the chance of war. Do not bewail
A fate so far above my highest hope
When last we parted. Men are born to die.

Cor. But not, like thee, in youth untimely slain.

Titus. This active day has been an age of life.

Rome is deliver'd. Thou hast still a son.—
Why mourns my brother o'er a soldier's fall?
Paul. I grieved not, Titus, when our lot was equal.
Cor. There will be wars again to snatch thee too.
Fear not too long a life: the useless live,
The vile, the odious; thy desert is death.
Titus. My limbs grow weak, upon the earth I'll rest.
Have I redeem'd my rashness? O my father!
Æmil. 'Tis scarce a blemish to be brave to rashness.
To thee Rome owes her safety, her existence;
And with her chief deliverers ranks thy name.
Titus. I feel my father's praise, now when the hand
Of death comes near my heart.
Cor. I will be calm.
O let me not disturb his parting soul.
Sustain me, mighty gods!
Titus. To sooth her grief,
My Paulus, be thy care. My last request,
My father, hear. O comfort that good man;

His son before me rushing, in his breast
Received a javelin, that was aim'd at mine.
Cherish his age. [*Dies.*

Æmil. Thou Roman, to the height
Of Roman virtue! to lament for thee,
With common wailings, were a feeble part,
And far beneath the spirit of thy fall;
Unworthy of thy father.

Paul. From this place
Let me persuade my mother to retire.

Cor. I must behold the dead. Fear not excess,
Nor vehemence, from me. Those features wear
A look of triumph. Yes, thy mother's heart,
Amidst her anguish, at that look revives.
The cruel fate thy generous mind embraced
Thou hast escaped, to meet the death thou lov'dst,
In arms, victorious o'er thy prostrate foe.
Now to the place, where I will dwell with grief,
And ever listen to my hero's praise.

[*Exit* CORNELIA *with* PAULUS.

Priest. He fell not till each omen was accomplish'd,
Himself, his brother, and his country free.
No height, beyond the summit where he stood,

On earth remain'd: that he might ne'er descend,
The gods could only grant a death like his.

Æmil. Hence to the Forum bear the noble corpse;
And let the music of the legions sound
A warlike symphony, whose strains express
Our mingled state of triumph, and of sorrow.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE,

SPOKEN BY MRS CIBBER.

Our Author, as I'm told, is not to seek
In ancient lore; in Latin, nor in Greek.
I therefore did advise him, as a friend,
To make his learning serve some useful end:
And let me tell, what rules he hath observed,
What unities of time and place preserved.
He answer'd, Poetry is not an art;
'Tis nature only frames the poet's heart:
Still as he thinks the scene, he feels along,
And from his bosom bursts the raptured song.
This is the sacred oracle, the shrine
The bard consults, and here, the tuneful Nine.
With the same fire, the hearer's soul must glow,
Else vain to him the tale of tragic woe.
There is a temper, which is all in all,
That sounds responsive to the poet's call,
Like Memnon's harp, which pour'd harmonious lays,
Whene'er its strings were touch'd by Phœbus' rays.
This temper of the soul is sweet and wild;
It sobs, or smiles, as sudden as a child;
To woes imagined, tears unfeigned gives,
And in the poet's world of fancy lives.

Whilst thus he spoke, a bell was heard to ring;
He stopp'd, and, startled like a guilty thing,
Ere the dread curtain rose, in haste withdrew,
And at a distance waits his doom from you

THE

FATAL DISCOVERY;

A

TRAGEDY.

———Moriens animam abstulit hosti.
Tum super exanimem sese projecit amicam,
Confossus, placidaque ibi demum morte quievit.
Fortunati ambo!—Si quid mea carmina possunt
Nulla dies unquam memori vos eximet ævo.

VIRG.

PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MR BARRY.

WHEN first the children of the Muse began
To try their magic on the mind of man,
Astonish'd mortals saw, with wond'ring eyes,
The fair creation of the bard arise.
Hence is derived the Poet's lofty name,
For Poet and Creator mean the same.;
He, from his fancy, where the seeds of things,
As in a chaos lie, to order brings
Worlds of his own, and builds the lofty rhyme,
Whose polish'd strength defies the rage of time.
Such were the bards, whom critics call divine,
Homer the father of the godlike line,
The Mantuan bard, whom all mankind admire,
For sweet expression and for vestal fire.
Shakespeare and Milton, both in England born,
Whose glorious names the Queen of Isles adorn,
Who, proudly sitting on her azure throne,
In arts and empire will no equal own.
Thus far our author as a prologue writ,
And would have been, I think, a-writing yet,
Enamour'd of his theme.—But I drew near,
And whisper'd that of him you wish'd to hear.

'Twas difficult he said—in such a case
He could have wish'd another in his place;
To tell with what alternate hopes and fears,
An anxious author on the stage appears;
For, like the nightingale, he hath addrest
Himself to sing—a thorn at his fond breast.
If, like the native warbler of the grove,
His plaintive notes are full of tender love;
Your hand may pull the thorn that caused his pain,
And give him spirit for a nobler strain.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

KATHUL, *King of the Isles.*
DURSTAN, *King of the Picts.*
RONAN, *Prince of Morven.*
CONNAN.
ORELLAN.
EURAN.
CALMAR,
Messenger.

RIVINE.

Subjects, Chiefs, &c.

THE

FATAL DISCOVERY.

ACT I.

SCENE,—*A Grove, with Trees blown down.*

Enter KATHUL, *King of the Isles, and several of his Attendants.*

1 *Attend.* King of the Isles—

Kath. I'll hear no more: begone!
Back to the mountains where you left your lord,
Nor dare return without him to the vale.

[*Exeunt Attendants.*

Enter EURAN.

Eur. How have those men provoked their prince's wrath?

Soft is the voice of Kathul to his people.
What evil have they done?

Kath. My faithful Euran!
Those dastards left their master in the storm
That rose at eve: my son hath pass'd the night
Alone upon the hill beyond the lake.

Eur. Of him no fear; both hill and dale he knows,
Cavern and cave, and every shelter'd spot
Of the wide forest.

Kath. Not one moment's peace
Have I enjoy'd, since to the Pictish king
I gave my daughter's hand. Unhappy, she
In secret anguish pines her life away!
My son, afflicted, shuns his father's sight,
And in the woods and forests wastes his days,
A lonely hunter. To complete my woes,
Our new ally keeps not his promised time;
Is this his Pictish faith?

Eur. Doubt not, O king!
Doubt not the faith of Durstan, nor the love
He bears his queen.—Soon shall you see his sails
Rise on the distant wave, white as the fowls
That chace the flying shoals.—When he arrives,

Let not indulgence grant the least delay,
But waft Rivine to the Pictish shore.
When she has left the place, where every tree
And rock and haunted stream recal the memory
Of what she should forget, her grief will fly
Like mist before the wind.

Kath. Rather the mist
Will thicken into darkness. Euran, my heart
Misgives and chides itself. Sprung as I am
From ancient Albion, in her evil days
I left her shatter'd side. By passion sway'd,
And rage at perjured Ronan, I forsook
The stock of which I came, and join'd myself
By strict alliance to her mortal foe;
To him, whose arm had hew'd her branches down.
From deeds, like this, in wrong of nature done,
Observers date commencement of decay,
And strange disaster to the guilty line.

Eur. Disaster seize on him who broke his faith,
And threw away the pearl of womankind!
O! could my wish recal that signal hour,
When Elig's hall blazed with a thousand shields
Of kings and heroes, emulous to please
The all-admired daughter of the Isles!

Rivine, partial to her brother's friend,
Preferr'd the Prince of Morven; though by far,
In wealth and power, inferior to the Pict,
And other royal suitors for her love.
Yet he, distinguish'd, favour'd, honour'd thus,
Ungrateful man! forsook the matchless maid;
Without complaint, pretence, abandon'd her,
To wed the Queen of Erin*—In my mind
Most happily for thee, and for thy house;
Else thou, the friend of vanquish'd Albion, still
Hadst shared the fortunes of a ruin'd people.—

Kath. Not ruin'd yet—

Eur. Expell'd their native land,
Their king and more than half his princes slain.

Kath. Another king succeeds: Congallus claims
His right of blood. Here in the bay last night
A rover of the main his vessel moor'd;
He told me he had seen, on Norway's coast,
A fleet immense: far off, it seem'd a wood,
Stretching from cape to cape; as if the firs
From their eternal mountains had come down,
To grow amidst the waves.

---

* Ireland.

Eur. Was this huge fleet
Prepared against the Pict?
Kath. It was; and charged
With mighty armies: both the kings were there
Of Lochlin* and of Norway.—On the deck
Of one, the headmost ship, Congallus stood,
Wooing the winds to fill his hoisted sails:
With him a multitude of warriors, born
In various climes, of the Albanian race;
Who, though they never saw their father's land,
Call it their country too. The foremost they,
The fiercest in her cause.
Eur. 'Tis Ronan's cause!
For him the sons of Erin lift the spear;
For him the kings of Scandinavia arm.
But let them come, the pirates of the North!—
Strong is the Pict, and mighty his allies!
Who can resist the Romans?
Kath. By their force,
And not his own, though he is great in arms,
The Pict o'er Albion's warlike sons prevail'd;
But now the Roman eagle southward flies;
The dark-eyed chief his legions has withdrawn,

* Denmark.

To quell the Britons; nor can Durstan hope
Their present aid.—

Eur. ——I trust he shall not need!
Behold Rivine comes——

[*Looking towards the wood.*

Kath. ——Entranced in thought—
See how she tosses to the skies her arms,
Now wrings her folded hands! Thus is she wont
To wander through the woods, ever alone,
And ever mourning. Like a wounded deer,
Apart she stalks, and seeks the darkest shade
Of hanging rocks, and melancholy boughs,
To hide and nourish her determined sorrow.—
Let us avoid her. O, unhappy child!
I fear thy father's counsel has undone thee!

[*Exeunt.*

Enter RIVINE.

Riv. How soon is evil done! The sycamores,
The pines, whose bulk successive ages rear'd,
The tempest of one night hath overthrown!
Thou too art fallen, thou fair and stately oak,
Beneath whose pleasant shade Rivine sate,
When first she listen'd to false Ronan's love.
O, thou expressive emblem of my state!

Like thee, the chief in beauty and in place,
I flourish'd once; now rooted up like thee,
I wither on the field. Daily I die!
Delighted, I perceive my swift decay.
There will I make my grave; under that rock
In peace shall rest the daughter of the Isles,
Who, till she's laid in earth, no peace can know.
No peace for me! O, how I envy you,
Ye lovelorn maids! who, slighted and forsaken,
Yet entertain no motion of revenge,
But mildly bear your wrongs, decline and die,
The blameless victims of inconstant man!

Enter CONNAN.

Ha! does my brother come to see Rivine!
What has procured me this unwonted favour?
Con. Perhaps in prudence, and in love to thee,
I should conceal my tidings; but my heart
Cannot contain them. Though it make thee wretched,
Yet I must tell thee, that my friend is wrong'd.
Ronan is innocent; he loves thee still;
He never ceased to love thee!
Riv. I believe it.
He never ceased to love, who never loved.

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But why pretend, why counterfeit again?
Has Erin's queen found out how false he is,
And thrown the specious traitor from her arms?
And does he think once more to find Rivine
Free, credulous, and fit to be deceived?
But me he thinks not of; he courts thy aid;
He needs the valour of his partial friend.
A stranger still to what his crimes have done,
He knows not who I am; he does not know,
That Connan's valour guards the Pictish throne.

Con. This flash of indignation, O, my sister!
Gleams for a moment o'er thy troubled mind;
But darkest woe shall shortly close around thee.
I have a dreadful story for thine ear.—

Riv. A dreadful story! how can he be wrong'd,
Who publicly renounced his plighted faith,
Plighted a thousand times?

Con. He never did:
He sent no message to renounce thy love.

Riv. What then was Valma?

Con. An unhappy wretch,
The slave of gold; gain'd by the worst of men,
To work thine overthrow.

Riv. Leave me to judge
Of my condition. Tell me what thou know'st.

Con. I need not tell Rivine why I shunn'd her,
Since Durstan was her husband; I have fled
The human race, distracted in my mind,
With grief, and shame, and anger: oft my soul
Resolved revenge on Ronan. By and by
Something would whisper that we were deceived;
That noble Ronan never could be base.
Perplex'd with thoughts like these I ranged the woods,
And heeded not the game my dogs pursued.
The storm surprised me yesterday, I stray'd
Beyond my usual bounds; nor could I find,
Amidst the darkness of the driving blast,
A path to guide aright my doubtful steps.
As night came on, more furious grew the storm.
The thunder bellow'd and the lightning glanced
Along the dreary heath: before, behind,
And on each side the sudden torrents roar'd.
I wander'd on, and frequently I thought
The world without was like my troubled mind.
At last, far in the east, whence the wind blew,
I heard the howling of a shepherd's dog;
With lighter steps, I turn'd me to the sound,
And heard it oft repeated. As I hoped,
It led me to a hut—I enter'd there;

And by the embers of a fire of turf,
I saw a ghastly man stretch'd on a bed,
Of sticks and heath composed. Come near, he said,
And listen to the dying voice of Valma.——

Riv. Of Valma!——

Con. Valma, whom I had not seen
Since he, for Erin, with his master sail'd:
I found he did mistake me for his host,
And silent listen'd with a beating heart.
Your charitable cares, he said, are vain;
My hour draws nigh.—Good shepherd, you have lodged,
Under your blameless roof, the basest wretch
That ever lived on earth. My name is Valma,
The favour'd servant of the Prince of Morven.
My master sent me, from green Erin's shore,
With tokens and a message to his love,
The fair Rivine: but a tempest drove
My luckless vessel on the Pictish coast.
Durstan, the king, by promises and threats,
Compell'd me to deceive the constant maid,
And falsely to report, that my brave lord
Renounced her love.—Rivine, thou grow'st pale!
Lean on my arm.——

Riv. No: I have strength enough!

Lead me, my brother! lead me to the place
Where Valma is.

Con. At midnight he expired—

Riv. Would he had lived one other day for me!
O! I had much to ask him: did not Ronan
With eyes of love behold the beauteous queen?
So I have often heard, and that was told
Long before Valma came.——

Con. Ay, so it was
Contrived and told, on purpose to prepare
Thy mind, thus tainted, to receive the tale.
But know, for I explored the heart of Valma,
The noble Ronan, in the hall of kings,
Who sought alliance with so brave a chief,
Fondly display'd—his passion for Rivine.
With gems of thine he deck'd his conqu'ring arms,
And raised the song of beauty to thy praise!
Such ostentation wither'd the desire
And kill'd the hope of every blushing maid.
The hero comes, unalter'd in his love,
And finds thee——

Riv. Connan! me he shall not find!
We ne'er shall meet again—When does he come?

Con. Be-like to-morrow, or perhaps to-day.
This is the appointed time, the season meet

For enterprize of arms. Now the mild moon
Of autumn rises when the sun descends,
And at the self-same hour, for many a night,
Lifts her fair head, to bless with light the world.
I mean to share the perils of my friend;
Nor shall Rivine as an hostage go
Against her brother's and her Ronan's sword.

Riv. Would that the swords of both were in my breast!—
Ye winds, that I have wish'd should sleep for ever;
Ye southern winds! from Etha's mountains blow,
And waft to Elig's bay the Pictish fleet!
I go to Durstan's kingdom——

Con. Go, and perish!
Hast thou no rage, no indignation in thee?
No generous drop in thy exhausted veins?
Art thou so tame, so vile, so base of soul,
To bear the sight of Durstan? Crimes like his
Dissolve all ties. Besides his wrongs to thee,
He murder'd Valma on the lonely heath;
Murder'd the traitor to conceal the treason.

Riv. Yes, I am base and vile; my soul submits
To each opprobrious name from Ronan's friend;
But I am not so tame: my heart is full
Of rage, of anger, and of mortal hatred!—

Con. To whom?

Riv. To Durstan's wife.

Con. Renounce the name,
And thou may'st still—Thy brother will defend,
And save thee from his power.

Riv. O! save not me
From any misery! But tell me rather,
How I may be more wretched than I am:
If thou can'st tell. Farewell my native land!
Ye woods and streams of Elig's vale, farewell!
Rivine leaves you with a broken heart,
To waste her days in horror and despair,
With the detested author of her woes.
But welcome woe to me! Fool that I was,
A wretch unworthy of a hero's love,
Who readily believed a lying tale,
Against the honour of the first of men:
Then in the cursed hour of jealous rage,
Gave up myself to misery and Durstan.

Enter Messenger.

Mess. The fleet so long expected, comes at last.
One lofty vessel far outsails the rest,
And bears the colours of the Pictish king.

Con. 'Tis well. [*Exit Mess.*] Bethink thee, sister!

Riv. 'Tis too late!—
I should have thought before I wedded Durstan.
Now would'st thou have me stay till Ronan comes?
'Tis not his anger, nor his hate I fear;
No, nor his scorn. My just desert is scorn;
But hide me, rocks and mountains, from his pity!
As the fond parent to the child relents,
When sore affliction lays the offender low;
So would his generous soul to pity melt,
Should he behold the ruins of Rivine!
Come, Pictish Durstan! bear me from his sight,
To die unpitied in thy hated land!— [*Exit.*

Con. She's desperate—and what will Ronan be,
When, high in hope, he hears she's lost for ever?
His words, his gestures, I remember well,
When last we parted at the vessel's side.
From his embrace I turn'd me to the shore:
His arms he stretch'd, and caught my hand again;
He prest it to his breast, he wrung it hard;
And, with a look of infinite affection,
Connan! he said, my king commands; I go:
To thee, my friend, I leave my love in charge!

Fondly I promised to defend the maid.
What shall I answer when he claims his bride?—
She must not go with Durstan. O, my sire!
Thy wrath I fear, and not the Pictish sword!
But Ronan has my faith.—Where is my page,
So swift of foot? Thy master calls thee, Calmar.

Enter CALMAR.

Cal. What would my lord?

Con. Now, Calmar, win my favour;
I have a message for the eagle's wing,
On the swift pinions of the wind, to bear;
Exert thy utmost speed!

Cal. Speak, and I fly;
Swift as the arrow from my master's bow.—

Con. Here lies thy way: come on, and mark my words. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE,—*The Palace of* KATHUL.

EURAN *alone.*

I have been sleeping on a hollow bank,
Above a flood unfathom'd.—O, those slaves!
Who gave assurance of the death of Valma,
And boasted each that his good sword dispatch'd him!
The blame as yet on Durstan only falls.
Would I had never join'd my hand to his,
Nor touch'd the proffer'd gold!—Oft have I heard,
And now at last believe, 'tis safer far
To deal deceitfully with crafty men,
Than practise art on unexperienced youth,
Whose passions sally out beyond conjecture,
And, by extravagance, confound the wise.
The passions of this prince are like the wind:
The Pictish name is odious to the tribes,
Whose hearts still sway to Albion's kindred race.

If Connan calls to arms, enraged they rise,
Like billows when the furious tempest blows.—
The kings have met: how shall I warn the Pict
Without alarming Kathul?—Here they come.

Enter KATHUL, DURSTAN, *and several Pictish Chiefs.*

Dur. Excuse my long involuntary absence!
Uncertain is his hour whose work is war,
Who takes his way across the changeful main.
Euran, thou faithful servant of thy lord,
I greet thee well.

Eur. With joyful heart, O king!
I see thee in the wish'd-for hour return.

Dur. Soon must I quit again this friendly shore;
For I am doom'd to pass my life in arms.—
The wandering heir of Albion's vanquish'd line,
Congallus, threatens to invade my kingdoms.
This on the seas I learn'd.

Kath. I can confirm
The truth of that report.—

Dur. King of the Isles!
I'll give those bold invaders warlike welcome!
At eve, with favouring tide, I sail again.
The radiant moon, with all her splendour, shines

To light my vessel through the wat'ry way.
Impart my purpose to thy beauteous daughter,
And tell the urgent cause.

Kath. —Urgent, indeed;
Unwilling as we are so soon to lose thee,
Tidings like these admit of no delay.
But let us spread the feast, and raise the song,
Whilst yet thy steps are here. Sweet to the ear
Is melody, and pleasant to the soul
The tale of battles fought, and woes endured,
By chiefs, who long have ceased from war and woe.
We, in our turn, O king! shall pass away,
And in the song be found.—

Eur. The Queen draws near.

Enter RIVINE. KATHUL *advances towards her.*

Eur. [*To Dur.*] Stay not the feast, there's danger in the hall;
Demand thy queen; her brother knows too much.

Kath. Now, as becomes thee, meet thy husband's love,
And look complacent on the Pictish chiefs;
Through many dangers they have reach'd the shore.

Dur. Cold is my welcome! slowly she approaches,
Silent and sad, fix'd on the earth her eyes.

With such reluctance, such averted looks,
In bitterness of soul, a captive comes
Before the conqueror, whose hands are red
With her dear kindred's blood.

Riv. King of the Picts,
Thou read'st my thoughts aright; within thy breast
Dwells an interpreter that cannot err.

Dur. To these injurious words, I know not, queen!
What answer best belongs. Thy gloomy mind
Some foul suspicion of thy husband stains,
Changing to hatred and to harsh disdain,
That melancholy, and that cold reserve,
Which I regretted once. Unfold thy thoughts!
And shew the viper that has stung thy soul.—
She heeds me not. Ha! wherefore dost thou tremble,
And stare so wildly on a stranger's face?

Riv. [*To one of the Picts.*] Permit me, stranger, to behold that sword;
Trust it, I pray, one moment to my hand.—
[*The Pict gives the sword.*
It is, it is his sword! I know it well,
This jewel once was mine!

Kath. What means my daughter?

Riv. Behold the sword of Ronán!—O, my father!
Too certain sign the hero lives no more.—
Is this thy nuptial present, cruel king!
But I accept it, for it suits our love.

Dur. Not in the hearing of these gallant chiefs,
Whom I would wish to hold thee high in honour,
Will I reply to passion: Thou hast named
The owner of the sword. His it may be;
But whose it was, I never knew before.

Riv. Thou can'st no more deceive me. The long train
Of treachery and lies, the murder too,
Has been detected. Miserable Valma
Lived only to reveal it.—Now thou comest,
With this proud trophy of thy work complete.—
O, thou sole relic of the first of men!
Signal of death! memorial of the brave!
Companion of my woes, perhaps the end!—
Why didst thou thirst, O Durstan, for his blood!
Hadst thou not wrong'd him, was not that enough?
But thou didst wisely, to consult thy safety;
For conscience told thee, whilst the warrior lived,
The robber was not safe.

Dur. Thy words are madness;
If I had kill'd him, was he not my foe?

Riv. How did the hero fall?—By fraud he fell?
For he was still invincible in arms,
Alone a match for many in the field.

Dur. That sword, the sight of which disturbs thy soul,
Is not the trophy of a hero slain;
In evil hour I found it.

Riv. Found it! where?
Was not its owner near?

Dur. If he was near,
Thou hast conjectured right, he lives no more;
For where I found it, death and horror reign'd.

Riv. Now, I believe thee, Durstan! Tell me, Pict!
How, when, without a master too, thou found'st
His sword, who never yet was foil'd in arms?

Dur. As in our way to thee we cross'd those seas,
Whose rage scarce summer tames, a tempest rose,
A dreadful one, as ever swept the main.
All night we labour'd in the jaws of death,
But, when the morning dawn'd, the tempest ceased;
Red, on the troubled deep, the sun arose,
And shew'd a dismal object to our eyes;

Fast, on a ridge of rocks, a wreck appear'd,
Which seem'd the ruin of a noble vessel;
Near as our safety would permit we sail'd,
And view'd the fate, which might have been our own.—
The ship was broken by the heavy seas,
Parted in two; and all about the rocks
Dead bodies floated on the tossing waves.
Riv. Was there no living creature?
Dur. No, not one.
Low are the rocks; their ragged tops are seen,
And barely seen, above the smoothest sea;
But in a storm their place is known afar,
By the white waves, that rage, and swell, and break
Like mountains o'er them; there no man could live.
Whoe'er aboard that luckless vessel sail'd,
Embraced the same inevitable doom.
Riv. Was the sword there?
Dur. It was. About to leave
The wreck, we sought some token of the dead,
By which they might be known. That sword was spied,
Caught in the cordage of a mast it hung,
And glitter'd through the water.—

Riv. 'Tis enough!
If at my feet his breathless body lay,
I could not be more certain of his fate.
In those wild waves the chief of warriors died;
To me he hasten'd through the seas and storms;
Unknowing of his wrongs, for me he died.

Kath. Forbear, my daughter! for my sake forbear!

Dur. And for thine own, O Queen! respect thyself.

Riv. I will. For ever I renounce thee, Durstan!
To Ronan's memory I devote my days!
Few are the days that of my life remain.—
Hear me, amazed spectators! ye who think
Rivine has forgot her sex's shame;
And judge me with more justice. In my hand
I hold the sword of Ronan. Who he was,
And of what high renown, is not unknown;
For through the kingdoms of the north his name
Flew on the wings of Fame.—His love to me
And mine to him, for I avow my love,
My sire approved.—To him I was betrothed;
But, in his absence, Durstan did seduce
A faithless servant to betray his master.
He framed a message from the noble Ronan,

Rejecting me, and setting free my faith;
Then urged a fond exasperated maid,
And with the help of her deceived father,
Precipitated her disorder'd mind
To yield a rash consent.—That was my crime,
Which I deny not; nor refuse to bear
My punishment, which, like my crime, is great.
Despair consumes me! wither'd like the leaf
Of autumn is my beauty. Now I stand
On the dim threshold of the house of darkness;
Remorse pursues Rivine to the tomb.

Dur. Who with a woman's frenzy can contend?
Thou hast avow'd thy hatred to thy husband,
And to another own'd thy guilty love:
For loss of him thou ravest——

Enter Messenger.

Mess. King of the Isles!
On Mora's top the fiery signal burns.
I saw a troop, in shining steel array'd,
Descend the hill, by active Calmar led.

Kath. Whose hand presumes to light the warning fire
That never burns in peace? Where is my son?
The feet of Calmar fly at his command.

Mess. To war they fly. On the high-pointed rock
That runs into the bay, Connan himself
Stands like a tower. His angry voice he sends
Along the roaring waves, and shakes his spear
Against the Picts approaching to the shore.

Dur. I am betray'd.

Kath. Of me distrustful too?

Dur. The son my enemy, I dread the sire.—
My brave companions, whose renown in arms
Rose on the ruins of a greater foe
Than Connan is, or those who swell his pride,
Now let your valour shine. At bay we stand,
But not like timid deer.

1 *Pict.* Our lives are thine:
With thee we conquer, or with thee we fall.

Kath. Some angry spirit hovers in the air,
And scatters rage and fury.—Hear me, Pict!
Suspicion argues oft a guilty mind;
A noble spirit never. Sheath your swords!
I am your guard in Elig. To the shore
I go to quell the tumult, and receive
Thy people as my friends.—My daughter, hear
Thy father's counsel. Never was a child

To a fond parent dearer. O, Rivine!
Much of my hope is lost; but do not thou,
In rash resentment, throw the rest away.
Think who thou art! the daughter of a king,
And of a king the wife! the pledge of peace
Among the nations; be not thou the cause
Of war and mortal strife! thy name shall go
To future times for good, or ill-renown'd,
The curse or blessing of thy native land,
And of thy father's house. My child, be wise!
Forget the past, which cannot be recall'd;
And arm thyself with patience.—

[*Exeunt* KATHUL *and* EURAN.

Dur. Sweet the voice
Of those that counsel peace. Rage was not made,
Nor lasting anger, for a gentle breast.
My soul is innocent of Ronan's fate;
And if I used some art against a rival,
Ascribe it only to excess of love.
Wise are thy father's words. Forget the past,
And be hereafter happy.

Riv. Leave me, Pict!
I hate the present; I abhor the past!
The time to come, Durstan, is not for me.

I hasten to the tomb! There I shall find
Forgetfulness. O, leave me to my sorrows!
Leave me to die here in my native land,
Where once with peace and innocence I lived,
(Companions whom my soul shall know no more)
Till thou cam'st hither. Thou hast made me wretched
Beyond all utterance, example, thought,
Or stretch of fancy. When the mournful bard
Seeks a sad subject for the midnight song,
He shall reject the woes of other times,
And choose Rivine for the tale of tears.

Dur. Forbear such fond complaints, and henceforth, queen,
Think of the duty which thy state requires.

Riv. 'Tis my chief duty to renounce that state,
And thee, for ever. [*Going.*

Dur. Hence thou must not go.
I will not trust thee to thy own disposal.

Riv. Am I a captive?

Dur. No, nor art thou free
To cast thy husband off. Foul shame it were
For me to suffer such contempt from thee.
Willing or not, forthwith thou must embark;
Thy prudent father yielded his consent;
Be thou persuaded rather than compell'd.

Riv. I shall be neither; my deliverer comes!

Enter CONNAN.

Con. Unhand my sister! else——

Dur. Thou guard'st thyself,
By mixing with thy threats a name of safety.

Con. My safety, Pict, depends not on thy will.
Behold my force, to thine superior far.—

[CALMAR *appears, with the warriors of* CONNAN.

But fair and equal, man to man, I meet thee,
I use no vile deceitful arts like thee.
I take no base advantage of a foe.

Dur. Am I thy foe?

Con. Hast thou not wrong'd my friend?
And dost thou ask if Connan be thy foe?

Riv. Alas, the friend of Connan lives no more!
Behold!——.

Con. 'Tis Ronan's sword; with life and this
At once the hero parted. Ah, my sister!
How came it hither?

Riv. Durstan!

Con. Ha! the spoils
Of Ronan by his foe in triumph borne!
No tears I shed: red are thy drops, revenge!

Durstan, call up thy courage; rear thy crest,
And to a bold defiance, boldly answer.
I charge thee first with treachery and falsehood,
Crimes that strike down the warrior's gallant plumes;
With murder next, for wretched Valma's death;
For Ronan last; for Ronan, basely slain;
By hands like thine, he could not else have fall'n.
With mortal hate I call thee to the combat.

Riv. My brother, hear me! not by Durstan's hand,
Nor by the arm of man, did Ronan fall.
Far from the shore, amidst the stormy waves,
Amongst the cordage of a vessel wreck'd
The sword was found.—Forgiven be my wrongs,
And to his kingdom let the Pict return.

Dur. Great is thy clemency! Permit the Pict,
Injured, defy'd, dishonour'd, to be gone.—
Is Durstan's name of such account in Elig?
Are these the terms on which he quits the field?
Connan, thy challenge and thy wrath I scorn;
Rivine as my queen, I justly claim:
That claim deny'd, I shall lay waste your Isles,
And to my kingdoms add one sceptre more.

Con. If she desire to pass her days with thee,

She is not worth the splinter of a spear.
But if her soul reveres her lover's shade,
And flies from thee to solitude and sorrow,
My sword from insult shall the mourner guard.—
Thy threats I laugh at; thou unwarlike king,
To boast of conquest, and refuse the combat!
Wilt thou not fight, thou chief without a soul?
Then fly without delay. Now make thy choice;
Begone, or draw thy sword!

Dur. Vain-glorious youth!
Thou fit companion of the boaster Ronan,
Whom I could wish this moment in thy place!
I'll seek the king. If he denies me justice,
Unworthy as thou art of Durstan's sword,
Expect me soon.

Con. Thou wilt not come so soon
As Connan wishes.

[*Exeunt* DURSTAN *and Picts.*

Riv. Why this strife for me?
Who should be shunn'd like the infectious blast,
Which, where it takes, destroys. Ronan is dead,
Let not the friend of Ronan fall for me.
I have a refuge sure. Behold yon cliff,
Whose summit, jutting o'er its wave-worn base,
Darkens the deep below.

Con. Fly from despair!
And seek the shelter of thy brother's love,—
The friend of Ronan will protect Rivine.
If the pale ghost that dwells amidst the storm
Retains th' affections of its former state,
O'er us the ghost of Ronan shall rejoice.
To Elig's towers thou must not now return.
Come on; I'll lodge thee in a place of safety,
The cave of sad Orellan; now the tide,
Retiring, leaves a passage cross the bay.—
Riv. Go to the hall of Elig. Tell the maid
. . . . [*To* CALMAR.
Omazia to give out that there I rest,
And watch as if she guarded my repose. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE,—*A Cliff on the Sea-shore with a Cave.*

RIVINE *and* ORELLAN.

Orel. Behold the habitation of Orellan!
For threescore years and ten this rock has been
My dwelling place; and here I sit in sorrow,
Silent and motionless from morn to eve;
'Till the sea fowl that skim along the shore,
Fearless alight, and, sitting at my feet,
Scream their wild notes, as if I were a stone
Or senseless trunk, that could not do them harm.—
It was not always thus; I was not born
To misery; nor in the wild woods bred
Of savage race; fair was my morn of youth!
With thy brave grandsire I was train'd to arms,
His chosen warrior, and his trusted friend.
But love and jealousy surprised my soul,

Drove me from men, and blotted out my name.
This arm Namora slew.

Riv. Father, forgive
My importunity! Vouchsafe to tell
What I in part have heard.

Orel. My story's old,
Thy sorrow recent: but to hear my woes
Will teach thee patience. Such as thou art now,
Or as thou wast, e'er grief had made thee wan,
Namora was. Like thine, her beauty charm'd
Contending princes; but the gen'rous maid
Preferr'd to princes fond Orellan's love.
Daily we met in woods, in groves, in glades,
Remote and secret. One unhappy time,
Returning from the chace, I sought the grove.
Ent'ring, I saw Namora; her white arms
Embraced a youth; her lips were join'd to his.
My bow was in my hand; I bent it soon,
And pierced them with one arrow. Ere I reach'd
The spot on which they fell, Namora's eyes
Were closed for ever. The expiring youth
Was her brave brother, to his native shore
That day return'd. His sister's steps he traced,
To perish in her arms. I kneel'd me down,
And begg'd the warrior, if he yet had strength,

To give me death. He heard me not; he died,
And left me living.—This bleak cave I chose,
My everlasting mansion. In those days
The hollow shore resounded with my cries.
Often the hunter hasten'd from the hill,
And oft the mariner steer'd from the deep,
And wonder'd at me. Time, that rage subdued
To milder grief. My tears incessant flow'd
Like waters from the rock. Here have I mourn'd
An age of man complete. Alike to me
Summer and winter, autumn and the spring,
And night and day the same.—

Riv. Thus would I wish
To waste my days, a spectacle of woe!
Without or change or interval. I feel
Within myself a source and spring of sorrow,
That ne'er shall cease to flow, 'till death shall stop it.
Surely the spirits of the dead delight
To be remember'd, and lamented, father.

Orel. Daughter, they do—my own experience tells.—
Once every year, that day Namora died,
A wondrous vision comes. In the still air
(For not a breath then stirs the silent bay)

Are heard the saddest, yet the sweetest sounds,
That ever touch'd the ear or heart of man,
The melody of woe.—Then from the skies
Descend the shadows of the murder'd pair,
Pale as the colours of the lunar bow.
Hov'ring before the cavern's mouth they spread
Their arms; they fix on me their pitying eyes,
And with a shriek, they vanish into air.
Does hoar tradition tell a tale like this?
Was ever mortal destiny like mine?

Riv. Could I but hope to see my love arise,
And look on me with pity, I would live
In the vast ocean on a rock alone.
But Ronan's injured ghost detests Rivine.
In the dark world of spirits thou shalt join
Thy dear Namora's shade; but far from mine
The angry spirit of my love will fly.

Orel. I have another charge besides thee, daughter!
Within my cave a wretched stranger lies,
Who tasted all the bitterness of death,
But scarce yet knows his wonderful escape.

Riv. Escape from what?

Orel. From shipwreck in the storm
That raged last night upon the rocky shore.

Riv. From shipwreck! ha! Is he a man in years,
Or of the youthful time?

Orel. In prime of youth,
And beautiful he seem'd, though in the arms
Of death upon the naked beach he lay.
I found him there. Attentive I perceived
That the warm life was not yet wholly fled.
I call'd a shepherd swain to give me help,
Who from a neighbouring hill survey'd the deep.
He came, and willing in his arms he bore
The youth insensible; he brought him hither.
Within he lies, stretch'd on the skins of deers;
A sleep profound has seized him; when he wakes
He will not know, if in a friendly place,
Or in the dwelling of his foes he lies.—
I'll go——

Riv. Not yet a while.

Orel. Thy colour shifts
From pale to red, from red to pale again.
What dost thou hope or fear?

Riv. A strange event!
Yet, like the fate and fortune of my life,
Wild and incredible. Perhaps this youth,
Saved from the wreck, and sleeping in thy cell,
Is Ronan.

Orel. No; delusive are thy hopes;
The various vest and floating robe I know
Of Albion's warlike race. He wore not those.
His dress is splendid, bright with foreign gold,
And marks the chieftain of a distant land.

Riv. Enter, and if he sleeps, to me return.
I will behold and bless him where he lies;
Then from his presence fly, if it is Ronan.

Orel. I hear a noise within; the stranger comes;
His steps sound on the rock.

Riv. Now, my heart!
Thy moment this. [RIVINE *retires to the side scene.*

[*The stranger from the inner part of the cave sees* ORELLAN.

Strang. Thou venerable man,
Preserver of my life! for so methinks
I ought to call thee: tell me on what shore
The waves have thrown me? For the place imports
Almost as much as life.

Riv. 'Tis he. 'Tis Ronan!

Ron. Rivine's voice! I am where I would wish;
My love is here!

Riv. Thy love! approach me not,
Thou noble youth! Nor call Rivine thine.

Ron. Not call thee mine!

Riv. No, never, never more!
I am unworthy of thy least regard;
Unworthy of the air that Ronan breathes.
When thou shalt know what cannot be conceal'd,
Thou must abhor me.

Ron. I abhor Rivine!
Ah! thou art changed indeed since I beheld thee!
Anguish gleams in thy eye, and wild despair
Contends with shame.—Rivine, speak, and save me
From horrible conjectures.

Riv. Spare a wretch,
Whose heart is breaking! Fain, fain would I speak,
And tell thee how Rivine was betray'd.

Ron. Betray'd! to what betray'd?

Riv. Will not the rock
Fall down, and cover with a heap my shame!
Follow me not! this hoary sire will tell
My crime; my misery cannot be told!

[*Runs into the cave.*

Ron. It must be so.—Thou confidant of guilt,
Perhaps the counsellor!

Orel. Young man! attend
To every circumstance of this misfortune,
And thou wilt pity her whom once thou loved'st.

Ron. Tell me one circumstance; I ask no more;
Is she not wedded?

Orel. Listen to my words,
And thou shalt have an answer to thy question.

Ron. I have no patience for a tedious tale:
Answer at once: is she not wedded, say?
Then I may hear thy story.

Orel. It were better,
Better for thee, rash youth! to let me tell
How this disaster did o'ertake thy love.

Ron. Wilt thou not say what the disaster is?
How tedious, hard, and obstinate is age!

Orel. Unless I should deceive thee to thy hurt,
I can no longer hide from thee the truth.

Ron. Then she is wedded?

Orel. Yes.

Ron. Durst thou say yes?

Orel. Unwillingly I speak the painful truth:
My soul is grieved for thee.

Ron. Thou art the cause
Of what I suffer. Thy officious hand
Saved me from death, to make me perish worse.
My latest thought, when sinking in the storm,
Was of Rivine; of her love, her truth,

Her grief eternal for her Ronan lost.—
And now I find her in another's arms;
Of me regardless, though my faithful heart,
Full of her image, for her sake despised
The beauteous Queen of Erin's warlike land.

Orel. Young man! thou wrong'st Rivine.—

Ron. Would that thou,
Who say'st I wrong her, were a young man too,
And strong and valiant to defend her cause!
Let me behold the traitress, and confound
Her guilty soul.

Orel. Go, give thy passion way,
Pursue and seize her in thy frantic arms;
Then throw her headlong from the airy cliff!
I kill'd the maid I loved; I thought her false,
But she was truth itself.

Ron. And wedded too?—
But who is he that durst invade my right?
What is his name? She says she was betray'd.
Who of mankind is he?

Orel. Her husband!

Ron. Oh!

Orel. The Pictish king.

Ron. Durstan, my mortal foe!

The curst oppressor of my native land!
From all mankind has she selected him,
Whom most my soul abhorr'd?
Orel. She never chose:
She was betray'd, deluded, and compell'd.
Thy servant Valma, gain'd by Durstan's gold,
Deliver'd to Rivine a false message;
Cold and contemptuous, full of slight excuse,
For breach of faith confest, and, worst of all,
Fraught with the praises of the beauteous queen,
Whose love had made thee lord of Erin's land.
Ron. Could she believe him?
Orel. The bold traitor swore
That he was witness to the proud espousals.
Ron. O, villain! villain!—Did she credit this?
Orel. How could she doubt it?
Ron. Ha! did she not know me?
Did not each action of my life belie
The monstrous tale?
Orel. Long before that, the Isles
Resounded with the fame of thy great acts
In Erin's wars perform'd; and rumour spread
Abroad the story of the grateful queen.
Ron. Where was my friend?
Orel. When Durstan came to Elig,

Connan was absent in the distant Isles;
His faith to thee this day of danger proves.

Ron. This day!

Orel. The fraud of Durstan was detected,
And from presumption strong thy death believed;
Rivine, who till then conceal'd her anguish,
And veil'd with sickly smiles her broken heart,
Then own'd her love and publish'd her despair.
With threats the Pict requires his wedded wife:
Connan defies him, and demands the combat.

Ron. I knew he would; my brave, my faithful friend!
But mine the cause, and mine shall be the combat.

Orel. The tribes are up in arms; for strong's the host.
That haughty Durstan leads.

Ron. I have no arms,
The deep hath swallow'd up my sword and shield.

Orel. Here is a sword.

Ron. A sword! It is my own.
Never more welcome to thy master's hand.
I'll trust thy temper tried. This on the shore
Did'st thou not find?

Orel. Rivine brought it hither,
And bathed it with her tears.

Ron. Did she, Rivine?
Of her I must not think while Durstan lives;
Father, farewell——

Enter RIVINE.

Riv. Yet stay and hear me, Ronan.
Behold Rivine, prostrate at thy feet!
I know I never must behold thee more;
And from that certainty derive the boldness
To offer to thine ear my last request:
When I am dead, as I shall shortly be,
Think not too hardly of me. By the ghosts
And spirits of the air that wait for me,
I never ceased to love thee. My fond heart,
Even when I thought thee false, and strove to hate thee,
Even then my tortured heart was full of thee;
'Tis this that sends me to an early grave;
I could not bear to be and not be thine.—
O, Ronan! Ronan! when in dust I lie,
And thou art wedded to some lovely maid,
Worthy of thee, unlike the rash Rivine;
Then let thine anger cease! my fleeting ghost,
For ever near thee, shall some pleasure know.

Ron. May Durstan's jav'lin nail me to the ground,
And may my dying eyes behold thee borne
Aboard his vessel, if I do not love thee!
Then of my pity judge.—

Riv. Thou giv'st too much.
First let the earth receive my lifeless clay,
Before thou pitiest me. My fate is fix'd,
The place is chosen where my tomb shall rise:
A little hillock in the narrow plain,
Beside the rock, fast by the water-fall,
Where in my better days we oft have met.
Shun not the place which thou wast wont to love;
But come alone, come when the mourner's voice
For me hath ceased, and silent is the vale;
Then if thy soul is willing to be sad,
Look on my grave.

Ron. Thy grave! thou shalt not die.
My soul is in my voice; forgive thyself,
What Ronan has forgiven. Speak not of death:
Let me not hear thee utter such a sound,
Unless thou mean'st to send me to the field
Subdued by thee, dishearten'd and unmann'd,
An easy prey to some inglorious arm,
The conquest of a coward. Dost thou hear,

And not reply to this? No, not one word!
But sullen silence, and a down-cast eye.
Thy will shall be obey'd! when I am slain—
Within thy destined grave let me be laid,
If the stern umpire of thy fate and mine
Permit so much, and thou dost not disdain
To rest beside the victim of thy pride.

Riv. To what a narrow ridge thou driv'st Rivine!
A dreadful precipice on either hand!
And I can only chuse which way to fall.
I've wrong'd thee much; let me not wrong thee more,
Nor come a dark eclipse across thy fame.
Go where thy valour bids; go in full strength
And confidence; let not a fear for me
Unnerve thy mighty arm. I will endure
The load of life; embrace all shame and sorrow;
Rather than thou should'st bow thy noble head
Beneath the sword of an insulting foe.

Ron. Now I am strong!

Orel. A nimble foot descends
The winding path.

Riv. 'Tis Calmar's airy gait.

Enter CALMAR.

Cal. I come in haste to warn——

[*Sees* RONAN.

Ron. Be not afraid!
Believe thine eyes; the friend of Connan lives.

Cal. Friend of my master's soul, for whom he mourns,
O prince of Morven! like the morning beam
Thou com'st to chace the heavy night of woe
That darkens Connan; hasten to his aid;
Many the foes whom he for thee defies.

Ron. Where is thy lord?

Cal. On the wood-skirted lawn
Beyond the hill of pines his warriors stand;
The Pictish army covers all the shore.—
I saw our aged king tear his grey locks,
As he implored them to forbear the fight.

Ron. Shame to my soul! why do I tarry here?
Farewell, farewell, Rivine! [*Exit.*

Riv. To the field
Rejoicing in his might the hero goes,
And so he should; from me he parted well.—
I see, I see the path that I must follow,
Bright as the starry way that shines above,

When the blue frost is beautiful in heaven.
Thy tidings, Calmar?

Cal. Your retreat is known.

Riv. To Durstan?

Cal. No; but to your troubled sire,
Who, partial to the Pict, his daughter blames.
Connan entreats you to forsake this place,
And seek the shelter of the inland vale.
I am your guide and guard.

Riv. I'll leave this place,
And thou shalt be my guide. Father, farewell!
[*To* ORELLAN.
The joy that dwells with tender grief be thine,
To me, alas! denied.—No pleasant ray
Can ever reach the dark abode of shame.
One issue yet is left.

Orel. I read thy thoughts,
Hadst thou been silent I had known thy purpose.
Thy port exalted, thine enlighten'd eye,
Denote the pitch of thy determined mind;
The storm-toss'd vessel seeks a shore unknown.
I blame thee not, O daughter of affliction!
Strange is thy destiny! thyself alone
Can be thy counsellor.

Riv. Affliction's friend!

Devoted vassal of eternal sorrow,
Thanks for thy gentle sympathy. If thou
Should'st give a tear to me, or my sad story,
Namora's memory wou'd not be wrong'd.

[*Exeunt* RIVINE *and* CALMAR.

Orel. Bright star! that hastes to set. O child of youth,
Like the green oak, before its head is bare,
Untimely torn from some high mountain's brow,
So shalt thou fall, but not without thy praise.
This cave, a while the mansion of thy woes,
Those hoary cliffs, and yon resounding bay,
Shall often echo thy lamented name.
My voice shall pierce the stillness of the morning,
And evening's milder calm, bewailing thee.
Namora's gentle shade will love the song
That joins her sister-memory to thine.

ACT IV.

SCENE,—*A Thick Wood.*

Enter KATHUL *and* CONNAN.

Con. My friend is dead. But friendship never dies.
Remember, sir, how Ronan fought for me.
The youth were met in the sequester'd vale,
And held a feast of joy. The bards arose,
And sung heroic deeds achieved of old.
Roused with the song, the chiefs began to boast
Their own exploits in arms. Above the rest
Proud Armor vaunted, trusting in his strength;
Truth he regarded not; he told how once,
In Ardven's vale, he met the blue-eyed maid,
Old Alpine's daughter; Connan was her guard,
Who shunn'd the combat, and resign'd the maid.
Silent and pale my sad companions heard;
But from the banquet, gen'rous Ronan rose,

And dared the giant to maintain his words,
By combat on the plain. Furious they met,
Like two strong bulls contending for the herd;
They fought from mid-day, till the setting sun
Gilded the vale; then Ronan's arm prevail'd,
And Armor bit the ground. Fast by the lake,
Mark'd with a stone, is seen his lengthen'd grave;
Eternal monument of Ronan's faith,
And of his glory; but of shame to me,
If e'er my soul forgets the hero's love.

Kath. Ha! who comes yonder rushing from the wood,
Swift as the roe? See at one bound he leaps,
From bank to bank, the brook. Connan, beware!
His ready weapon glitters in his hand.

Con. Spirits of earth and air! 'tis Ronan's form.
Thus have I seen him hasten to the field,
Thus spring exulting when the foe drew near.

Kath. Oft have I heard the voice of mournful ghosts,
Borne on the wings of the careering winds,
But ne'er till now beheld—It stops and glares
With angry eyes on me. Speak thou, my son!
For ye were one.

Enter RONAN.

Con. O, spirit of my friend!
Com'st thou to urge thy Connan to revenge?
Ron. I am no spirit: Come, my faithful friend,
And in my arms feel that thy Ronan lives.
Now art thou satisfied? [*They embrace.*
Con. I am transported!
Ronan to life restored, and at my side,
When in despair against his foes I arm'd!
I have a thousand questions, but not now.
I must be sudden and abrupt, my friend!
The times are so.—Sad tidings thou must hear.
But let resentment chace thy grief away:
The salve of sorrow is a brave revenge.
Ron. I come to seek revenge; my wrongs I know,
For I have seen Rivine. Where is Durstan?
I hoped to meet him in the battle's front;
But peace is here.
Kath. No, Prince of Morven, no!
Peace dwells not here. Between the swords I came
Of raging warriors, and obtain'd a truce
Until to-morrow's dawn. Although my hope

Of reconcilement at thy presence fades,
My troubled soul rejoices in thy safety.
Thy timeless death I mourn'd.

Ron. King of the Isles!
Why didst thou give thy daughter to the Pict?

Kath. Ronan, I was deceived. I hold thee dear,
And wish—But nothing can recal the past.—

Ron. Recal the past!

Con. Ronan!

Ron. Be not alarm'd!
O, king! thou art the father of my friend,
The father of my loved, my lost Rivine;
And that restrains my tongue. Yet I must say,
Hadst thou been constant to thy old allies,
Hadst thou been faithful, and preserved my bride,
This day had crown'd thy hoary head with joy.
Impatient to behold my love, I sail'd,
And left behind the Scandinavian fleet
Of warriors full. With these, Ierne's sons,
And Erin's chiefs, for injured Albion arm.
Selma shall rise again.

Kath. May Selma rise,
And Albion's honour'd race for ever reign.
Yet hear me, Ronan; from my heart I speak;
Thou bear'st a noble mind; thy fame is great

For justice as for valour; with the Pict
Thou hast a rightful quarrel; but respect
This hospitable shore; contend not here,
Nor fight with Durstan for his wedded wife.

Ron. Not fight with Durstan! Then let Durstan fly,
And I shall follow to whatever shore
He takes his flight.

Kath. I understand thee well.—
My son, do thou regard thy sister's fame!
A fairer aspect much her conduct wore,
When thy loved friend was number'd with the dead,
Than now, when he in arms her husband braves.—
I go to meet the ancients of the land,
The hoary counsellors, who can compare
The present trouble with the times of old,
And call experience to vouch their counsel.
Under the spreading beech, that shades the brook,
They sit and ruminate. [*Exit.*

Ron. Their thoughts I know.
Cold are the counsels of inactive age,
Patient of injury, averse to arms.
I long for vengeance, and my soul is sick
Of this delay. But why should I defer

My just revenge? no truce was made for me;
I'll send him a defiance.—

Con. Not to-day,
Nor yet to-morrow, do I wish the Pict
By Ronan's hand to fall.

Ron. If he should fall
By any other hand, I'm not revenged.
We're interrupted. Ha! what man is that,
Who steps so haughtily before the rest?

Con. It is the Pict.

Ron. I thought so.

Con. Yet be calm!
Your eyes flash fire; your heart beats in your breast
As it would burst your bosom.

Ron. Mark me, Connan!
This hour let my own spirit guide itself.
He knows me not. Beware of naming me,
I'll take my time to speak. [*Walks aside.*

Enter DURSTAN, *attended.*

Dur. I sought the king—
But thou, who hast usurp'd thy father's power,
May in his absence answer.—

Con. What's thy question?

Dur. A plain one,—Whither was the vessel bound,
That left the shore just now with crowded sails?

Con. I know not what she is, nor whither bound.
Why dost thou ask of me?

Dur. I do suspect,
She is dispatch'd to summon to your aid,
The warriors of the isles.

Con. Perhaps she is;
Credit thy worst suspicion; break the truce,
And I will thank thee. I desired no truce,
And never will have cordial peace with thee.

Dur. My faith, young man, is plighted to thy father,
And he shall own, to vindicate my fame,
That Durstan sought not to lay waste his isles,
Nor slay his people.

Con. If thou art sincere,
And tender of the lives of blameless men,
With me decide the quarrel; should I fall,
Rivine's dowry is a kingdom then.

Dur. Not that I fear thine arm, do I decline
To answer thy proud challenge; but thou art
The brother of Rivine.

Ron. Wise thy words,
And just the reason thou assign'st, O King!
But I am not the brother of Rivine;
And I accuse thee; I defy thee too!
Dur. Thou! who art thou!
Ron. Not less in blood and birth
Than Durstan is; of royal lineage born,
To Ronan near allied. Ha! dost thou start
And tremble, Pict, at injured Ronan's name?
Dur. Boaster, I know no fear; but thee I scorn.
Who vaunts his lineage, and conceals his name,
Is of his race the stain.
Ron. Soon shalt thou know,
Perhaps, somewhat too soon, the name I bear!
But, first, I'll tell thee thy detested deeds,
And gall, if possible, thine iron heart.—
Unlike a prince, a warrior, and a man,
Meanly thou didst seduce a servile soul
To wrong his master's honour and his love;
And by the blackest artifice betray'd
To endless misery a royal fair,
Who dies of grief and hate to the assassin!
And still thou dost presume—
Dur. Away! begone!

Ron. I will not; nor shalt thou from Ronan go.—

Dur. Thou, Ronan!

Ron. I! now, robber, dost thou tremble?
Unsheath thy sword! Each moment seems an age
'Till I avenge on thee my mighty wrongs,
And give thy spirit to the winds of heav'n.

Dur. So confident! Behold this sword I draw,
'Tis stain'd with blood of Albion's vanquish'd kings,
To Ronan near allied: I lift it now
To send thee to thy fathers.

Ron. Take my answer. [*They engage.*

1 Pict. [*Interposing.*] Let kings with kings contend, and subjects meet
A subject's arm——

Con. If thou lov'st honour, Pict,
Or fear'st eternal shame, command these men,
Thy subjects, to retire.

1 *Pict.* Should he command,
It is our duty now to disobey.

Ron. Let us assail them all!

Con. [*Advancing.*] Ronan, my friend!
Step not before me; let me guard thy side.

Enter KATHUL *and* EURAN.

[KATHUL, *coming between their swords.*]

Kath. My guests, forbear! and thou rebellious boy,
Put up thy sword, or shed thy father's blood.

Ron. Why dost thou guard my foes, King of the Isles!
What is thine aim? This is no sudden strife,
Sprung from a light and accidental cause;
It is a mortal quarrel, founded deep
On wrongs not to be borne. Let honour'd age
Avoid the sight of blood.

Kath. Hear me, rash youth!
My aim is to be just, and to prevent
A combat, whose event must fatal prove
To my allies, my children, and my fame.
Do thou hereafter, on some distant shore,
Pursue thy quarrel with the Pictish king,
And bear the cause of Albion on thy sword.
Now I forbid the war, and will propound
Impartial terms of peace. He who believes
His cause is just, will readily assent.

Dur. Although with us the odds of combat lie,

Not less in valour, and in number more;
If full assurance that my cause is good
Implies assent, on mine thou may'st depend.
Ron. May my sword shiver, when it strikes thy helm,
If it does not defend the better cause.
Kath. Thy soul is like the torrent of thy hills,
O Chief of desart Morven! Fierce thy words,
But confident and suited to my purpose.
Behold where yonder white and ragged cliff
Points the long ridge, and terminates the bay;
There, in a cave, the sea-mark of the main,
A man, unlike the rest of mortals, dwells.
Once great in arms, abreast of mighty chiefs,
The brave Orellan trod the paths of Fame:
But strange misfortune crost the warrior's way.
In early youth he kill'd the fair he loved,
Then left mankind, to live alone with sorrow.
Bare is his bosom to the howling winds,
And wet his hoary head, with foam that flies
From the resounding surges of the main;
The coot, the cormorant, are his companions.
Sometimes, he says, his cries bring from her cloud
The pallid image of the murder'd maid!

Ron. I know the sad Orellan. To what end
Dost thou describe to us the man of sorrow?

Kath. He is the judge who cannot be unjust!
For his pure mind no partial passion knows:
The sole affection of his breast is pity;
The man of sorrow feels for human woes!
To him submit the cause of doubtful strife,
And let his voice determine of Rivine.

Ron. Is this thy counsel, king? and dost thou think
That it will be regarded? Shall Rivine,
Like flocks or herds in contest, be adjudged?
No. Whilst I live, Rivine shall be free;
Rivine shall determine of herself.
She has determined never to behold
The face of Durstan, and I will defend
The resolution which my soul approves.

Dur. Art thou the judge?

Ron. I am, and thou shalt find so;
Follow my steps. In such a strife as this
The valiant know no umpire but the sword.

[*Exit.* KATHUL *stops* CONNAN.

Kath. By all the reverence thou ow'st thy father,
And by the love thou bear'st thy native land,

Stay 'till thou hear'st the Pict——

[*While* KATHUL *speaks*, EURAN *whispers* DURSTAN.

Con. What can he say?

Who still, though oft defied, declines the combat.

Dur. Kathul, I speak to thee. In just respect
To thy fair conduct, and thy chosen judge,
To his decision, conscious of my right,
I would submit my cause. But since the pride
Of haughty Ronan to the sword appeals,
I answer him—his challenge I accept;
And will to-morrow, with the rising sun,
Meet him in arms; here, where we first encounter'd.
'Tis thine, O king! to regulate the combat.

Kath. Durstan, I disapprove——

Dur. I know thou dost;
But thou can'st not prevent. It must be so:
King of the Isles, farewell!

Kath. Tarry a while;
Enter my hall, and of the feast partake.
The hall of Semo shines with many fires.

Dur. Fast by my ships, upon the sandy shore,
I'll pass the night. The feast of foes I shun.
Oft, when the circling shell awakes the soul,
Like flints the words of enemies strike fire.

Forth comes the hasty steel. Whoe'er prevails,
A doubtful fame the inglorious strife attends.
[*Going.*

Kath. Let me conduct thy footsteps to the shore,
And shew our people that in peace we part.
[*Exeunt all but* CONNAN.

Con. 'Tis not what I desired—'Twas my prime wish
To meet the Pict, and to revenge my friend.
Yonder he comes impatient——

Enter RONAN.

Ron. Ha! they're gone!
What said the Pict?

Con. Thy challenge he accepted.

Ron. Did he?

Con. He did; to-morrow is the time,
And this the appointed place.

Ron. Why not to-day?

Con. It is too late: sunk in the western wave,
The sun but half his glorious circle shews;
Soon will the splendour of his path be dim,
And his pale sister rule the silent world.

Ron. O, thou fair light! whose beams rejoice the heart

Of him whose thoughts are open as his deeds!
In thy dark chamber do not tarry long:
But, with unwonted speed, thy course pursue,
Till the grey eastern cloud grows red again,
Before thy flaming steps.

Con. My warriors wait.
Some care the business of to-morrow claims;
An equal number drawn from either host
Must guard the lists! Oh! were the combat mine;
My dearest friend once for his Connan fought—

Ron. When Connan was not there.

Con. Go to the hall.

Ron. Where is Rivine?

Con. To some place remote,
Far in the forest, Calmar has convey'd her.
Uncertain is the spot, and vain it were
To seek her at this hour. Turn to the hall,
And for my sake speak gently to my father.

[*Exit* CONNAN.

Ron. I wish I could avoid the sight of him
And every person. When the heart is full
Of its own swelling thoughts, society
Is molestation. Solitude is best.
Ye woods and groves! where I was wont to roam
With her I loved; I left you in your glory!

Fair as the grove of June I left my love!
Not long my absence, yet the leaf is fall'n.
Trees of the forest! you shall hear again
The voice of spring, and clothe yourselves a-new,
In the green robe you lost—But never more
Shall bud or blossom—Ha! what new event
Brings this keen messenger.

Enter EURAN *hastily.*

Eur. O prince of Morven!
Thy haughty courage, and thy upright heart,
Expose thee to the shafts of secret fraud,
Which Durstan aims.

Ron. At me!

Eur. Of that be judge.
Whilst every eye, secure of peace, is clothed,
Amidst the darkness of the night he means
To bear Rivine from her father's house,
And sail e'er morning rise.

Ron. Ha! I believe it.
This is the secret which explains his conduct.
Has he abettors in the house of Kathul,
Or does the robber trust in force alone?

Eur. He trusts in me.

Ron. In thee!

Eur. I plant the watch
Which guards the hall of Kathul; that he knows,
And with immense rewards assail'd my faith.
I seem'd to yield; and thus the plan is laid:
The youth that watch to-night, by me assured
That they obey in mine their king's command,
The princess seize. One bold and faithful Pict
Waits near the northern gate to give the word,
And lead them safely through the Pictish host:
That office Durstan chose.

Ron. Durstan!

Eur. Himself!
Wrapt in the shades of night, alone in arms.—

Ron. I have my soul's desire! ghost of my king!
Ghosts of my kinsmen, slain that evil day
When Albion fought without her Ronan's arm;
Leave the dark mountains where you mourn your fate,
Not yet revenged, and see me meet your foe!—
Euran! whate'er the lavish Pict has promised
To tempt thee to betray thy master's house,
Tenfold I'll give thee to preserve thy faith.
But let no man,—not Kathul, Connan,—know:
The wrong is mine, and vengeance is my right.—

The northern gate! what is the appointed time
Of his approach ?

Eur. The time that's most remote
From the sun's rising or his setting beams,
When o'er the castle red Tonthena burns.—
Shall I thy steps attend ?

Ron. Not for the world !
The moon, the stars, the spirits of the night,
They only shall behold the rough encounter.

[*Exit* RONNAN.

Eur. There goes the chief whose arm in battle rules,
Whose name alone brings nations to the field.
Yet, simple as the fry, he takes the bait:
Beyond my hopes this last device succeeds.
One night of care, then I shall shake no more.

[*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE,—*A Wood.*

Enter RONAN.

Ron. Twice have I made the circuit of the wood,
To waste the weary interval; and now
Right o'er the castle red Tonthena burns.—
Ye fleecy clouds that sail along the sky,
Come not too near the moon, to spread a veil,
Though transient, o'er her face! Lift up your heads,
Ye stars of heaven! and light the listed field.—
Methinks I see the figure of a man
Moving this way; within the shade he keeps.
A little onward, and the shade will fail.
'Tis he; his armour shines, he draws his sword,
And resolute advances. Here I'll stand

Till he comes nearer; then I'll spring upon him.
Now robber, villain, Durstan!

[*Runs to the side-scene.*

Enter CONNAN.

Con. Ronan, stay
Thy furious arm, 'tis Connan bids thee stay.

Ron. Connan? What strange encounter!

Con. Strange it is,
And fatal might have been; but let us trace
This error to its source. You call'd me Durstan,
When rushing on my shield: if I had spoken,
I should have call'd thee by no other name.

Ron. Didst thou come hither too, to meet the Pict?

Con. I came to meet the Pict. Now answer me,
Who gave the information of his purpose?

Ron. Euran.

Con. The traitor! 'tis as I suspected.
That villain is confederate with Durstan.
To you, to me, he told the self-same tale,
And sent us forth, to shock, and sink together,
Like vessels in a storm.

Ron. It must be so;
The circumstances banish every doubt.

This is another plot of that dark brain
Whose cruel guile at first o'erthrew my love.
Am I a beast of chace, a harmless deer,
For whom the hunter plants his mortal toils,
Himself secure and safe?

Con. One silent shaft,
Wing'd like the bird of night, hath o'er us flown.
Another's on the string. If right I judge,
Durstan is near, and many are our foes.

Ron. Would I could see them!

Con. We may feel them first,
If on this spot unguarded you remain.

Ron. Shall they not feel us too?

Con. My friend, be calm.
Not far from hence, a little to the left,
There is a dell, whose sloping sides are rough
With thick-grown hazel—In that place obscure
The best and bravest of my warriors lie.
Mistrustful of the Pict, I placed them there.
Now let us join them, and explore with steel
Each angle of the wood.

Ron. Prince of the people!
Valour and wisdom hand in hand advance,
When thou dost guide the war—let us divide

Thy band, and, parting, sooner sweep the vale.—

[*Exeunt.*

Enter RIVINE *and* CALMAR.

Riv. Didst thou not hear a voice?

Cal. It was the wind
Of midnight in the trees and hollow rocks.
This is no place of safety.

Riv. Yes—it is
A place of safety, and of rest for me.
Calmar, begone, and leave me to myself.—
Why stand'st thou motionless? Dost thou not hear?
I bade thee leave me.

Cal. Oh! I heard too well!
I have observed the tossing of your mind
E'er since we parted from Orellan's cave.
I led you to the forest dark and wild,
Full of sequester'd and secure retreats:
But you disliked each one, and roam'd about,
Till dewy night descended on your head.
Then all at once, with a determined tone,
You bade me follow you; and here you are
Between the towers of Elig and the shore.
What sort of rest, forlorn!—

Riv. Dost thou presume
On my distress? and am I fall'n so low
That thou controul'st me. Go!—
Cal. I must obey—
But full of sorrow is the soul of Calmar.— [*Going.*
Riv. Farewell, true-hearted Calmar! But thy truth
And loving service are intruders here;
The part I've taken I must act alone.
Cal. I fear her much. I'll hasten to the hall,
And bring her brother or her father hither. [*Aside.*
[*Exit.*
Riv. It is but weakness, when on death resolved,
Fondly to seek for easy ways to die.
Yet it is nature. Thrice I lifted up
The steel against my life, and thrice let fall
Mine arm, afraid to strike the fatal blow.
I see the oak beside the froth-clad pool,
Where, in old time, as I have often heard,
A woman desperate, a wretch like me,
Ended her woes: her woes were not like mine.
I love thee, Ronan! love thee to excess,
Nor am I less beloved. Who hears me now?
Silence, and night, and death, dumb as you are,
I will not utter more. Ronan will know

When he beholds me floating on the stream,
His heart will tell him why Rivine died.—
[*Running off.*

Enter DURSTAN *and* EURAN.

Dur. Stop!

Riv. Ah!

Dur. Again thou'rt found! I'll hold thee now,
Outrageous woman.

Riv. Durstan, from thy mouth
Reproaches please me best. Thou hast o'erheard
A portion of my words, and needs must know
I am above thy threats; beyond the reach,
The aim of human power.

Dur. That shall be tried.
I'll bear thee hence, confine and watch thee close,
Lest thy wild frenzy work thine own perdition.
Thy shatter'd judgment shall have time to join,
And to unite again. Then thou wilt bless
Thy husband's lenity, which could forgive
Offences gross as thine.—This is the path
That thou must walk in.

Riv. Never will I walk
In the same path with thee.

Dur. Thou hast no choice.

I have a right to rule thee—and the power
Is in my hands. I'll use it.
Riv. Right! what right,
Deceiver and betrayer of my soul,
Hast thou? But it were madness, I confess,
With thee to argue. For thy heart obdured
Admits no plea of reason or of nature.—
But Durstan this at least may comprehend,
I am resolved, immutable, to die.
And who can hinder me? Aboard thy fleet,
Amidst thy warriors, in the field, the hall,
In the dark dungeon or the vaulted cell,
Alike my soul is free to take its flight.
No chains, no fetters, can the spirit bind;
Which makes each instrument of opposition
The weapon of its will. Art thou convinced?
Or wouldst thou have me call those horrors forth
Which here inhabit, and to thy confusion
Blazon and vindicate my just despair?
Tell thee, if words can tell—
Dur. 'Tis loss of time
To listen to thy words— [*Lays hold of* RIVINE.
Riv. Is there no help? what will my brother think,

And Ronan, when they hear I am with Durstan?
Tear me in pieces!—— [*Struggling.*

RONAN, *behind the scenes.*

Ron. Villain, quit thy prey,
And guard thyself.—

Dur. Euran, bring up my men:
I'll stop his course.— [*Exit* EURAN.

[DURSTAN *holding* RIVINE *with one hand, and drawing his sword with the other.*

Enter RONAN.

Dur. Halt. If thou dost advance
One step, Rivine on the motion dies.

Ron. Inhuman murderer! withdraw thine arm
And drop thy point. Thou see'st I do not stir.

Dur. Keep farther off; bend not thy body forward,
As if preparing to spring in upon me,
And I will talk with thee.—What would'st thou have?
Why comest thou with thy weapon, ruffian-like,
To rob a husband of his wedded wife?
Is she not mine?

Ron. No, traitor! robber, no!
Fraud is the sole foundation of thy right,
And therefore thou hast none. If thou dar'st trust
Thy valour, or thy cause, let go her arm,
And in her presence with thy sword defend
Thy title like a man.—Ha! dost thou smile
And mock at me? Thou coward! thou assassin!
Basest of men! less valiant than the deer
That graze the hills. They for their mates will bleed,
And in their sight are bold.

Dur. Rage on, rail on,
Thy ineffectual passion I enjoy:
Our nations, Ronan, ever have been foes.
In enmity our fathers lived and died,
And we were born and nursed in mortal hate
Hereditary, ne'er to be appeased.
To fill the measure up—thou wast my rival;
I triumph'd o'er thee, and I triumph now.
Behold this woman here! is she not fair?
Though frowardness has somewhat marr'd her beauty.
Thou doat'st upon her, and she loves thee too;
But I——

Ron. Insulting villain!—

Dur. If thou lift'st
Thine arm, she dies.

Riv. Advance, and let me die,
For I have lived too long.—Ah! dost thou shrink,
Lean on thy sword and gnaw thy quiv'ring lip,
More tender of my life than of my fame,
Or peace of mind? Thou but prolong'st the term
Of shame and anguish. Know, I was resolved
(Though I dissembled, to appease thee, Ronan)
Before this dreadful parley, not to live.
That Durstan knows full well.

Dur. I know not that.
I know the nature of a woman's mind,
Direct in passion for a moment only,
And shifting like a whirlwind, as it flies
To every point of heaven.

Riv. Thou speak'st the truth.
I change my purpose now. And be assured
If I escape from thee, I shall return
To him, to Ronan, to the rightful lord
Of me and my affections. Do not risk,
By frivolous delay, thy dear revenge:
Wer't thou stuck round with eyes on ev'ry side,
And hung with hands to wield a thousand swords,

Yet thou might be surprised: strike while thou can'st,
And disappoint thy rival.

Dur. Though, indeed,
I seldom do believe what women say,
Yet, from my soul, I do believe thee now.—
This rage of death, this fury, this despair,
Are but the smoke and vapour of that fire,
That amorous fire which in your bosom burns.
Give it the air of hope.

Ron. Curse on thy tongue!
What dost thou mean in such discourse as this,
Self-loving Durstan, to consume the time?
Thou can'st not 'scape from hence. Connan is near,
With all the youth of Elig at his side.
E'er he arrives, once more I offer thee
The equal combat. If thou doubt'st thine arm,
Commit Rivine to her father's care.

Dur. Commit Rivine to her father's care?
To Ronan's care, to her dear lover's care!
He will be tender of her, and perhaps
May reconcile her to the love of life.
[*Looking to the side-scene.*
Now, mighty warrior, of thy valour vain,
And trusting for success to force alone,

I have amused thee, till the hour is past,
The moment of equality between us:
For though I deem mine arm as strong as thine,
Chance might have thrown the advantage on thy side.
Behold——

Riv. Ha! Euran with the Picts returns.
Now let the spirit of her race inspire,
In this extreme, the daughter of the Isles.
O, Prince of Morven! guard thy noble life.
From shame, from Durstan, this shall save Rivine.
[*Stabs herself.*

Ron. O dreadful act! [*To* DURSTAN.
On thee, thou wretch accursed!
Author of all our woes, I'll be revenged.
[*They fight, and are both wounded.*
This to thy heart, and this—down to the ground.
[*As* DURSTAN *falls,* EURAN *enters with the Picts, and receives him in his arms.*

Dur. Thou hast it too. I leave thee to enjoy
Thy conquest, and thy love.

1 *Pict.* Hence: Connan comes.
[*They bear him off.*

Ron. He's dead—Dishonour rest upon his name!

My love, my love!—How could'st thou?—But 'tis done.
I shall not long survive thee, that's my comfort.
Riv. O that's the torture which I cannot bear.
I was prepared for death, but not for thine.
For me there was no refuge but the tomb:
With thee I could not, nor without thee, live.
Ron. O do not speak so tenderly, nor look
With such heart-piercing eyes.
Riv. I had one hope
On which I lean'd, now I am all despair.
I thought (when I was dead) that from the cloud
Of grief, my hero would break forth again;
And run his course of glory, and of fame.
But thou art snatch'd away; I have undone thee;
Blasted thy youth, cut short thy noble life;
This is the fruit that thou hast gather'd, Ronan!
The only fruit of curst Rivine's love.
Ron. O! I could speak such things, but not to thee,
Whose gen'rous heart, regardless of thyself,
Amidst despair and death for Ronan mourns.
'Tis not thy fault. Fortune has cross'd our love;
But I would rather be what now I am,
Than love thee less, or yet be less beloved.

Riv. Beloved thou art. I die; give me thy hand.

Ron. My heart, my soul are thine.

Riv. O, best of men!
And best beloved! farewell, farewell for ever!
[*Dies.*

Ron. Flow fast my blood—why dost thou linger, death?
My heart is torn with agonizing thoughts.
O, memory, would I could fly from thee,
And give my moments to a softer sorrow!
Caught in an eddy, up and down the stream
I drive, and wheeling to one point return.
That monster there! that villain!—Land of ghosts!
Shall I forget it there? [*Dies.*

Enter CALMAR *hastily.*

Cal. Alas, my lord!
Too true the traitor's words.

Enter CONNAN, *with his Warriors.*

Con. Oh, Ronan! Ronan!
O, my ill-fated sister! love of thee
Brought down the tow'ring eagle of the war,
From his high rock of fame. Let me not blame;

Pity forbid that I should blame the dust
Of poor Rivine.—Bear the bodies hence.
Let not old Kathul see his daughter's blood:—
I left him standing by the corse of Euran,
O'erwhelm'd and dumb with grief.

Enter KATHUL.

Kath. I am the cause
Of all that has befall'n. Thy father's steps
Turn to his hall no more: deaf is mine ear
For ever to the voice of youth and joy.
Orellan's lonely cave shall hide my grief.
There will we dwell together, and decay
Like two old trees, whose roots hang uppermost
On some bare mountain's side, from which each storm
Wasteth a portion of the mould'ring soil,
Till down they fall.

Con. Do not indulge
Such melancholy thoughts.

Kath. I am resolved:
To thee, my son, the sceptre I resign;
I trust 'twill prosper in thy stedfast hand.
Thou wilt not listen to the tale of lies,
Nor in rash mood forsake thine ancient friends.

Oh, friend of Ronan! be the people's friend.
Still let thy open gate receive the stranger,
Who from the hill or from the ship descends;
So shall thy name, like grateful odour, spread
From thy own dwelling to fair distant lands.
I have no other wish. My son, farewell.

[*Exit* KATHUL.

Con. To-morrow we a monument shall raise
To mark the place where mighty Ronan rests
With fair Rivine, in the house of death.
If right my soul forebodes, they shall not lie
In dark oblivion: on their buried woes
The light refulgent of the song shall rise,
And brighten the sad tale to future times.
The brave, the fair, shall give the pleasing tear
Of nature, partial to the woes of love.

[*Exeunt.*

EPILOGUE,

WRITTEN BY MR GARRICK.

SPOKEN BY MRS ABINGTON.

[*Enters in a hurry.*]

FORGIVE my coming thus, our griefs to utter—
I'm such a figure!—and in such a flutter—
So circumstanced, in such an awkward way,
I know not what to do, or what to say.
Our bard, a strange unfashionable creature,
As obstinate, as savage in his nature,
Will have no epilogue!—I told the brute—
"If, sir, these trifles don't your genius suit;
We have a working prologue-smith, within,
Will strike one off, as if it were a pin.
Nay, epilogues are pins, whose points, well-placed,
Will trick your Muse out, in the tip-top taste!"—
"Pins, madam!" frown'd the bard, "the Greeks used none,"
(Then mutt'ring Greek—something like this—went on)
"*Pinnos, painton, patcheros, non Græco Modon.*"
I coax'd, he swore—"That tie him to a stake,
He'd suffer all for Decency's fair sake;
No bribery should make him change his plan."—
There's an odd mortal. Match him if you can.

" Hah, sir!" said I, " your reasoning is not deep,
For when at tragedies spectators weep,
*They oft, like children, cry themselves asleep.
And if no jogging epilogue you write,
Pit, Box, and Gallery, may sleep all night."—
" Better," he swore, " a nap should overtake ye,
Than folly should to folly's pranks awake ye;
Rakes are more harmless nodding upon benches,
Than ogling to ensnare poor simple wenches;
And simple girls had better close their eyes,
Than send 'em gadding after butterflies.
Nay, should a statesman make a box his nest,
Who, that his country loves, would break his rest?
Let come what may, I will not make 'em laugh,
Take for an epilogue—this epitaph.
For as my lovers lives I would not save,
No pois'nous weeds shall root upon their grave."—
'Tis thus these pedant Greek-read poets vapour—
Is it your pleasure I should read the paper?

Here, in the arms of death, a matchless pair,
A young loved hero, and beloved fair,
Now find repose.—Their virtues tempest-tost,
Sea-sick, and weary, reach the wish'd-for coast.
Whatever mortal to this spot is brought,
O may the living by the dead be taught!
May here Ambition learn to clip her wing,
And Jealousy to blunt her deadly sting;
Then shall the poet every wish obtain,
Nor Ronan and Rivine die in vain.

* Like harmless infants mourn themselves asleep.—ALEX.

ALONZO;

A

TRAGEDY.

Et mentem strinxit patriæ pietatis imago.

VIRGIL.

PROLOGUE,

SPOKEN BY MR PALMER.

WHILST ardent zeal for India's reformation,
Hath fired the spirit of a generous nation;
Whilst patriots of presented lacks complain,
And courtiers bribery to excess arraign;
The maxims of Bengal still rule the stage,
The poets are your slaves from age to age.
Like Eastern Princes in this house you sit,
The Soubahs and Nabobs of suppliant wit;
Each bard his present brings, when he draws near,
With prologue, first, he sooths your gracious ear;
We hope your clemency will shine to-day,
For though despotic, gentle in your sway.
These conscious walls, if they could speak, would tell,
How seldom by your doom, a poet fell:
Your mercy oft suspends the critic's laws,
Your hearts are partial to an author's cause.
Pleased with such lords, content with our condition,
Against our charter we will ne'er petition.
If certain folks should send us a committee,
(Like that which lately visited the city)
Who without special leave of our directors,
At the stage door should enter as inspectors;

Although their hearts were arm'd with triple brass,
Through our resisting scenes, they could not pass.
Lions and dragons too keep watch and ward,
Witches and ghosts the awful entrance guard;
Heroes who mock the pointed sword are here,
And desperate heroines, who know no fear;
If as Rinaldo stout each man should prove,
To brave the terrors of the inchanted grove,
Here on this spot, the centre of our state,
Here on this very spot they meet their fate.
The prompter gives the sign and down they go;
Alive descending to the shades below.
To you whose empire still may heaven maintain,
Who here by ancient right and custom reign,
Our lions couch, our dragons prostrate fall,
Witches and ghosts obey your potent call.
Our heroines smile on you with all their might,
Our boldest heroes tremble in your sight;
Even now with anxious hearts they watch your eyes,
Should you but frown, even brave Alonzo flies.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

King.

ALONZO.

ALBERTO, *his Son.*

COSTOLLO.

SEBASTIAN.

HAMET.

VELASCO.

Messenger.

ORMISINDA.

TERESA.

Officers and Attendants, &c.

ALONZO.

ACT I.

SCENE,—*A Hall in the Palace of the Kings of Spain.*

ORMISINDA, TERESA.

Ormis. This roll contains the secret of my life,
And of the state: My marriage with Alonzo,
The story of my son, my injured child,
Bred in a desert, though the heir of Spain.
To thee, my faithful friend, my loved Teresa!
This precious record I commit. Oh! keep it
From sight of human eye, till better times:
For still I hope that better times may come,
Though not to me, to this afflicted land.
My hand hath sign'd it, and my act to-day
Shall give it faith and credence with mankind.

This will explain the mystery of my fate,
And tell the world why Ormisinda died.
[*Gives the writing.*

Ter. Do not too soon despair.

Ormis. I wait the last
Decisive moment. But to guard my soul
Against the sallies of a rash despair,
Against the weakness which attends surprise,
I have forecast whatever may befall,
And framed to the event my firm resolve.
This is the day appointed for the combat,
Between a Moorish and a Christian knight,
To end the wars of Spain, and fix the fate
Of the contending nations.

Ter. Ancient times,
If tales of ancient times may be believed,
Have known such combats. In her infant state,
Against her rival Alba, Rome was pledged,
As now Asturia is: But later times
Afford no parallel.

Ormis. There never was,
Nor will there ever, while the world endures,
Be found a parallel to my distress—
I am the victor's prize—whoe'er prevails
He gains the princess, and the crown of Spain.

Such is the solemn treaty, sworn, confirm'd,
By every rite, which either nation owns.
Meanwhile I am Alonzo's wedded wife—
I am a mother—by the false Alonzo,
Who from his hate to me abandons Spain,
Which he alone can save. No other arm
Can match Mirmallon's force. Proud of his strength,
Already in the lists the Moor exults,
Secure of victory. The setting sun
Concludes the dreadful period of suspense,
And death alone from infamy can save me.

Ter. He yet may come. Far in the Nubian wilds,
That guard the secret sources of the Nile,
Velasco found the chief. The wind of spring,
The constant east, this year forgot its season,
And only since this moon her light renew'd
Began to blow upon the western shore.
On that I build a hope.

Ormis. I have no hope!
Review the story of my life, Teresa,
And by the past conjecture of the future.
First my lamented brother, blindly led
By proud Ramirez, quarell'd with Alonzo.
Then by Alonzo's sword Ramirez fell.

For that offence to banishment condemn'd,
Alonzo won me to accept his hand
Before he left this kingdom. Since that time,
What I have suffer'd, Heaven, and you can tell.
It was the fifth, a memorable day,
After our marriage, when he fail'd to come,
At the appointed place to meet his bride.
Then 'midst my fear, anxiety, and sorrow,
For only death, I thought, or dangerous harm,
Could keep him from my arms, amazed I heard
Thas he was gone for Asia. To this hour,
Even to this present hour, no cause assign'd
But these distracted lines long after sent:
"Thou never shalt behold Alonzo more;
The foul, foul cause thy guilty conscience knows."
My conscience knows no cause, so help me heaven!
Now, in my utmost need, this dreadful day,
When I must struggle with despair and death,
To keep myself a chaste, a blameless wife,
And to my silent grave the secret bear,
That my dear son and his may live to wield
The sceptre of his fathers!

Ter. To this hour,
Thy husband knows not that he is a father.

Ormis. His ears, his eyes are shut. Oft have I sent
Letters, that would have pierced a heart of stone;
Pleading for pity, begging but to know,
Wherein I had unwittingly offended:
But every letter, with unbroken seal,
To me return'd. He will not read one word
From my detested hand.

Ter. 'Tis very strange,
And much unlike the way of other men.
For though they are inconstant in their love,
There is a course and process in the change.
Ardent at first, their ardour lasts not long.
With easy, full, secure possession cloy'd,
Their passion palls, and cold indifference comes,
As chilly autumn steals on summer's prime,
Making the green leaf yellow. Then it is
That some new beauty takes their roving eyes,
And fires their fancy with untasted charms.
But in a moment, from excess of love,
To the extreme hate of Alonzo pass'd
Without a cause. Nor did another come
Between thee and the current of his love.
'Tis moon-struck madness, or the dire effect
Of incantation, charm, compulsive spell,

By magic fasten'd on his wretched soul.
It can be nothing else.

Ormis. Whate'er it is,
He shuns all woman-kind. His life is spent
In war and in devotion. When the field
Is won, the warrior lays aside his spear,
Takes up the pilgrim's staff, and all alone,
Obscured in homely weeds, he bends his course
To some remote, religious, holy place,
Where he exceeds the strictest penitent,
In penances severe and sad austerity.
Sometimes in deeper melancholy wrapt,
He lothes the sight of man, and to the cliffs
Of hoary Caucasus or Atlas flies,
Where all the dreary winter he remains,
And, desolate, delights in desolation.
My faithful servant Juan saw him once
Upon the ledge of Atlas; on a rock,
Beside the empty channel of a brook.
He stood and gazed intent, a cataract,
Which, as it tumbled from a cliff, the blast
Had caught mid-way and froze before it fell.
Juan drew near and call'd. He turn'd about,
Look'd at him for a space, then waved him back,
And, mounting swiftly, sunk behind the hill.

Wan was his face, and like a statue pale!
His eye was wild and hagard! Oh, Teresa,
Amidst my woes, my miseries, my wrongs,
My bosom bleeds for him!

Ter. Something there is
Mysterious and unfathomable here,
Which passes human wisdom to divine.
The hand of fate is on the curtain now.
Within my breast a firm persuasion dwells,
That in the lists Alonzo will appear.
Behold, in haste the king your father comes,
And seems the messenger of welcome tidings.

Enter the King.

King. I come in this alarming hour, my child,
To pour a ray of comfort on thy heart.
A valiant Moor, once captive of my sword,
And ever since my firm but secret friend,
Acquaints me that a champion is at hand,
Shunning those honours which the Moors would pay:
Dark and reserved he travels through their towns,
Without a name. I judge it is Alonzo;
For the description best accords with him.
Scorning his foes, offended with his friends,

Shrouded in anger and in deep disdain,
Like some prime planet in eclipse he moves,
Gazed at and feared.

Ormis. It is! It is Alonzo!
Welcome, most welcome, in whatever shape.
The hero comes to save his native land,
To save the honour of the Christian name,
And o'er the fading crescent of the Moor
Exalt the holy cross.

King. And, even as thine,
In the consenting voice of all the land,
The hope of Spain on brave Alonzo rests.
In this I see the ruling hand of heaven:
Which to its own eternal purpose leads,
By winding paths, the steps of erring man!
Painful it were to speak of those events,
Sad and disastrous, which have laid us low.
Unjustly was Alonzo banish'd hence,
And happily the hero now returns.
For since my son, your valiant brother, fell,
With an impartial mind I have inquired
And traced the story of Alonzo's birth.
He is the offspring of our ancient kings,
The rightful heir of Riccaredo's line,
Called the Catholic, who reign'd in Spain,

Before the first invasion of the Moors.
Lost in the gen'ral wreck, buried and hid
Beneath the ruins of a fallen state,
Obscure, unknown, the royal infant lay,
When I, indignant of a foreign yoke,
In wild Asturia rose against the Moors.
The righteous cause prevail'd; the baffled foe
Retired, and left us and our mountains free.
The grateful people chose their leader king.
I knew not then, nor did my people know,
Aught of Alonzo.

Ormis. I have heard him own
The justice of thy title to command
And rule the state thy valour had restored.
Enough, he said, remain'd for him to conquer:
The fertile provinces of ample Spain,
Which still the Moor usurps.

King. Of all mankind,
He is the champion whom my soul desires
This day to fight for Spain, and for my daughter;
Not only for his great renown in arms,
But for his birth, his lineage, and his blood.
If his unconquer'd arm in fight prevails,
The ancient monarchy shall rise again,
In all its splendour and extent of empire.

The streams of royal blood divided now,
Shall roll a tide united through the land.

Ormis. Thy heart dilates with pleasing hopes, my father!
And fond anticipates its own desire.
But who can tell the purpose of Alonzo?
His strange approach no friendly aspect bears:
He comes the foe determined of the Moors,
But not to us a friend.

King. Of that no fear.
I know him proud, impetuous, and fierce,
Haughty of heart, and high of hand: Too prompt
On all occasions to appeal to arms.
But he was ever gentle to my daughter:
The proud Alonzo bow'd the knee to thee.
At his departure I observed thy grief,
And in my mind—— [*A Trumpet sounds.*

Ormis. What means that shout of war?

King. The trumpet sounds to arms.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Thy presence, sir,
Is at the camp required. Both nations arm,
And rush to battle: Loud the Moors complain
Of violated faith. A Spanish knight,

They say, has broke the treaty, and attack'd
Their bands, of peace secure.

King. 'Tis basely done!
Command my guards to meet me at the gate.
Farewell. [*Exit the King.*

Ter. Who can this headlong warrior be?
Too well Alonzo knows the laws of war,
Too much reveres the treaty seal'd and sworn,
To make a rash attempt upon the Moors.

Ormis. If it is he, 'tis no deliberate act,
No treacherous intention to assail
The Moors unguarded. Yet it may be he:
My mind misgives me that it is Alonzo.
Ill would his swelling spirit brook the sight
Of Moorish tents and arms on yonder plain.
If, as he pass'd, one slighting word was dropt,
With tenfold scorn to that he would reply,
Nor hesitate alone to draw his sword
Amidst a host of Moors.

Ter. The clamour sinks.
Whate'er it was, the tumult is appeased.
And now what does my Ormisinda think
Of my predictions?

Orm. Oh! my dear Teresa!——
Thy fond desire to cheer my hopeless heart

Makes thee for ever to my mind present
The fairest side of things.

Ter. Ha! dost thou doubt
Still of his coming?

Orm. No, I think 'tis he;
But hope and fear alternate sway my mind:
Like light and shade upon a waving field
Coursing each other, when the flying clouds
Now hide and now reveal the sun of heaven.
I tremble for the issue of the combat;
And if my lord should, as I hope, prevail,
I tremble for myself: Afraid to see,
Though sick with strong impatience to behold him,
And learn why he forsook his Ormisinda.
He says I know the cause. Oh, most unjust!
Was it because I loved him to excess,
Although his title shook my father's throne?
Was it because I join'd my fate to his,
And fondly chose to wed a banish'd man?
For such are my demerits.

Ter. 'Tis but vain
Thus to torment thyself, and rack thy mind
With sad conjectures, at a time like this,
When the reality will soon be known.

Orm. I know one thing that's real, 'tis a fault,

An imperfection which I cannot cure;
Eighteen long years are past since I beheld him,
And grief and care, those tenants that deface
The sad and dreary mansion they inhabit,
Have dwelt with me. Am I not alter'd much?
The ghost and shadow of what once I was?

Ter. No, Ormisinda, I perceive no change,
That in the least impairs thy lovely form.
The beam that gilds the early morn of youth
Yields to the splendour of a riper hour:
The rose that was so fair in bud, is blown;
And grief and care, though they have dwelt with thee,
Have left no traces of their visitation,
But an impression sweet of melancholy
Which captivates the soul. Unskilful they
Who dress the Queen of Love in wanton smiles:
Brightest she shines amidst a shower of tears;
The graces that adorn her beauty most.
Are softness, sensibility, and pity.

Orm. Oh! how ingenious thou art, Teresa,
How subtle to elude my simple fears!
Still they advance and gather round my heart.—
If nothing can recall Alonzo's love,
Let him but own his son, and I'll renounce

The title of his wife, and of a queen;
Then in a convent hide me and my sorrows.
The saddest sister of the holy train,
Whose watchful zeal prevents the midnight bell,
Shall find me kneeling on the marble floor.
Oh! it will be the luxury of grief,
To weep incessant in the vaulted cell,
To lift my hands, and send my vows to heaven,
Invoking every power that dwells above,
To guard and bless my husband and my son!
Perhaps some friend, most likely my Teresa,
When I am quite forsaken and forgot
By all the world, will still remember me;
Will come and tell me of Alonzo's wars;
Tell how my boy in his first battle fought,
At once the rival of his father's fame.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE,—*A Hall, &c. as before.*

Enter the King and a Moorish Officer, with Moors and Spaniards.

King. Hamet, impartial justice shall be done,
And thou I know as justly wilt report it:
Thou art the friend of peace.
Ham. Therefore I sought
This office; for in yonder camp, O king!
Some counsellors there are who urged the Caliph
To take advantage of this fair occasion
And hold the treaty void.
King. That I believe,
But with your aid I hope to disappoint them;
My guards are gone to bring the offender hither.
Ham. Yonder they come, and through their files I see
A prisoner.

Enter Guards with a Young Man armed.

King. Ha! by heaven, he's but a youth,
A beardless boy, and like a woman fair.
He moves my pity much.—Unhappy youth!
[*To the Prisoner.*
Art thou the chief of that unruly band,
Who broke the treaty and assail'd the Moors?

Youth. No chief, no leader of a band am I.
The leader of a band insulted me,
And those he led basely assail'd my life;
With bad success indeed. If self-defence
Be criminal, O king! I have offended.

King. [*To* HAMET.] With what a noble confidence he speaks!
See what a spirit through his blushes breaks!
Observe him, Hamet.

Ham. I am fix'd upon him.

King. Didst thou alone engage a band of Moors,
And make such havock? Sure it cannot be.
Recall thy scattered thoughts. Nothing advance
Which proof may overthrow.

Youth. What I have said
No proof can overthrow. Where is the man,
Who speaking from himself, not from reports

And rumours idle, will stand forth and say
I was not single when the Moors attack'd me?

Ham. I will not be that man, though I confess,
That I came hither to accuse thee, youth,
And to demand thy punishment.—I brought
The tale our soldiers told.

Youth. The tale was false.

Ham. I thought it true; but thou hast shook
my faith.
The seal of truth is on thy gallant form,
For none but cowards lie.

King. Thy story tell,
With every circumstance which may explain
The seeming wonder; how a single man
In such a strife could stand?

Youth. 'Twill cease to be
A wonder, when thou hear'st the story told.
This morning, on my road to Oviedo,
A while I halted near a Moorish post.
Of the commander I inquired my way,
And told my purpose, that I came to see
The famous combat. With a scornful smile,
With taunting words and gestures he replied,
Mocking my youth. Advised me to return
Back to my father's house, and in the ring

To dance with boys and girls. He added too,
That I should see no combat. That no knight
Of Spain durst meet the champion of the Moors.
Incensed I did indeed retort his scorn.
The quarrel grew apace, and I defied him
To a green hill, which rose amidst the plain,
An arrow's flight or farther from his post.
Alone we sped: at once we drew, we fought.
The Moorish captain fell. Enraged, his men
Flew to revenge his death. Secure they came
Each with his utmost speed. Those who came first
Single I met and slew. More wary grown
The rest together join'd, and all at once
Assail'd me. Then I had no hopes of life.
But suddenly a troop of Spaniards came,
And charged my foes, who did not long sustain
The shock, but fled, and carried to their camp
That false report which thou, O king! hast heard.

King. Now, by my sceptre, and my sword, I swear,
Thou art a noble youth. An angel's voice
Could not command a more implicit faith
Than thou from me hast gain'd.—What think'st thou, Hamet?
Is he not greatly wrong'd?

Ham. By Allah! yes.
The voice of truth and innocence is bold,
And never yet could guilt that tone assume.
I take my leave, impatient to return,
And satisfy my friends that this brave youth
Was not th' aggressor.

King. I expect no less
From generous Hamet.

[*Exeunt* HAMET *and Moors.*

King. Tell me, wond'rous youth!
For much I long to know,—what is thy name?
Who are thy parents? Since the Moor prevail'd,
The cottage and the cave have oft conceal'd
From hostile hate the noblest blood of Spain;
Thy spirit speaks for thee. Thou art a shoot
Of some illustrious stock, some noble house,
Whose fortunes with their falling country fell.

Youth. Alberto is my name. I drew my birth
From Catalonia; in the mountains there
My father dwells, and for his own domains
Pays tribute to the Moor. He was a soldier;
Oft I have heard him of your battles speak,
Of Cavadonga's and Olalles' field.
But ever since I can remember aught,
His chief employment and delight have been

To train me to the use and love of arms;
In martial exercise we past the day;
Morning and evening, still the theme was war.
He bred me to endure the summer's heat,
And brave the winter's cold: To swim across
The headlong torrent, when the shoals of ice
Drove down the stream. To rule the fiercest steed
That on our mountains run. No savage beast
The forest yields that I have not encounter'd.
Meanwhile my bosom beat for nobler game;
I long'd in arms to meet the foes of Spain.
Oft I implored my father to permit me,
Before the truce was made, to join the host.
He said it must not be, I was too young
For the rude service of these trying times.

King. Did he permit you now?

Alb. A strange adventure
Forced me from home. Not many days ago,
When hunting in the woods, I heard a voice,
A woman's voice, calling aloud for help.
I rush'd into the thicket; there I saw
A Moorish lord, for brutal licence famed,
Who shamefully abused a rural maid
Of Spanish race. I freed her from his arms.

The Moor spake not a word, but, mad with rage,
Snatch'd up his lance, which stood against a tree,
And at me flew. I turn'd his point aside,
And with a slender javelin pierced his heart:
I hasten'd home, but did not find my father;
Nor was it safe to wait for his return.
I took the fairest armour in the hall,
And hither bent my course. The rest thou know'st.

King. Thou art a prodigy, and fill'st my mind
With thoughts profound and expectation high.—
When in a nation, humbled by the will
Of Providence, beneath a haughty foe,
A person rises up, by nature rear'd,
Sublime, above the level of mankind;
Like that bright bow, the hand of the Most High
Bends in the wat'ry cloud: He is the sign
Of prosp'rous change and interposing heav'n:
And thou, if right I read"——

Enter Messenger.

Mess. The champion, sir,
Who comes to fight for Spain, is near at hand:
One of our scouts has seen him and his train,
But brings a strange report, which damps the heart
Of every Spaniard: It is not Alonzo.

King. What say'st thou? God of heaven! Not
Alonzo!
Who is he then?
Mess. That is not fully known.
Clad in the flowing vesture of the east,
A Persian turban on his head he wears,
Yet he's a Christian knight. To mark his faith,
Holy, and adverse to Mahommed's law,
Before his steps a silken banner borne
Streams in the wind, and shews a golden cross.
King. Send out another scout.
Mess. There is not time
To go and to return.
King. Begone, begone,
And let me be obey'd. Alas! my hopes
Are vanish'd like a dream. [*Exit Messenger.*
Alb. I grieve to see
The king afflicted.
King. Ah! Thou dost not know
How deep these tidings strike.
Alb. ——Is not the king
Free to accept or to refuse the aid
This stranger offers?
King. If I am, what then?
Alb. Be not offended, sir, at my presumption,

For from my heart I speak, a loyal heart,
True to my sov'reign and my native land.
If this is not Alonzo, why should he,
Or any stranger, fight the cause of Spain?
Are there not warriors born of Spanish race,
Who court the combat?

King. To my words attend.
The Moorish champion is of great renown;
In stature like the giant race of old,
Like Anak's true, or Titan's fabled sons.
Against the foe nor sword nor spear he lifts,
But in his might secure, a mace he wields,
Whose sway resistless breaks both shield and arm,
And crushes head and helmet. Thus he fights,
Whose fatal prowess turn'd the doubtful scale
Of three successive battles. He is deem'd
Invincible but by Alonzo's arm:
Therefore our warriors, though they know no fear,
No fear of aught that can themselves befall,
Anxious for Spain, to great Alonzo yield,
And on his valour rest.

Alb. Oft have I heard
My father speak of brave Alonzo's deeds;
What can withhold him when his country calls?
Perhaps the last of combats he has fought,

And in the silent tomb the hero rests.
But, since he's absent, from whatever cause,
O! let no stranger knight his place assume,
To bring dishonour on the Spanish name.
If this gigantic champion of the Moors,
Clad in the glory of his battles won,
Dazzles the warriors, and confounds their valour;
Let me, though young in arms, the combat claim;
On me his fame has no impression made.
I'll meet the giant with a fearless heart.
It beats for battle now. Oft have I kill'd
The wolf, the boar, and the wild mountain bull,
For sport and pastime. Shall this Moorish dog
Resist me fighting in my country's cause?

King. By heaven and earth, thou movest me much! thy words
Have stirr'd the embers of my youthful fire.
Thou makest me wish I could recall those days,
When of an age like thine, and not unlike
To thee in face and form, I raised the spear
Against the Moor, in Cava's bloody field.
Then by my hand the great Alchammon fell,
The strength and pillar of the Caliph's host.
Then I was fit to meet Mirmallon's arm.
But now, my hairs are gray, my steps are slow,

My sword descending breaks the shield no more:
Our foes have known it long.

Alb. O king! thou art
Thy country's great deliv'rer, and the sole
Restorer of the state. Pelagio's fame
Shall never die: But let thy counsel now
(As oft thy valour) save this land from shame.
Let not a foreign warrior take the field,
And snatch the glory from the lance of Spain.

King. My voice alone cannot determine that.
The council sit assembled near the lists,
To them I will present thee. If this knight
Unknown, who from that distant region comes,
Where the bright sun lights up his golden lamp,
Bears not some high pre-eminence about him,
Which marks him out our surest safest choice,
My voice is for a Spaniard, and for thee.

Alb. Upon my knees, that ne'er were bow'd before
To mortal man, I thank thee.

King. Rise, Alberto!
To me no thanks are due. A greater king,
The King of Kings, I deem hath chosen thee
To be the champion of his law divine
Against the Infidel.—If not for this,

For some great purpose sure thou art ordain'd;
Bred in the desert, and by heaven endued
With force and valour marvellously great,
Conducted by a hand unseen, thyself
Not knowing whither, and this day produced
Before the nations.

Alb. Ah, my soul's on fire!
Should such a glorious destiny be mine!
May I entreat to go without delay?
I fear some gallant warrior may step forth,
And claim the fight before me.

King. Stay, Sebastian,
And to my daughter tell what has befall'n.

[*Exeunt King and* ALBERTO.

Manet SEBASTIAN.

Seb. How many changes mark this awful day!
What must the Princess suffer! Well I know
That she, above all others, wish'd Alonzo.

Enter ORMISINDA *and* TERESA.

Ter. It is a false report. In times like these
The minds of men are credulous and weak:
To rumour's shifting blast they bow and bend,
Like corn of slender reed, to every wind.

Thou know'st that from the east Alonzo comes;
Might not the hasty messenger mistake
For him some turban'd warrior of his train?

Orm. O, good Sebastian, canst thou tell me aught?
Is it Alonzo?

Seb. If report speaks truth,
And so the king believes, 'tis not Alonzo.

Orm. Then I am lost, Teresa.

Ter. Hast thou heard,
If not Alonzo, who this stranger is?

Seb. His garb bespeaks him native of the east.
But from whatever clime the warrior comes,
I hope, my princess! that he comes in vain.
Another warrior, and of Spanish race,
Now claims the combat for his native land.

Orm. Of Spanish race! Who is this knight of Spain?

Seb. A wonder! never was his equal seen,
For daring valour and address in arms.
He has not yet attain'd the prime of youth;
His look partakes more of the boy than man;
But he hath vanquish'd men. This day the Moors
Have felt his hand.

Orm. Ha! Is it he, Sebastian,
Who was the author of the late alarm?

Seb. The same.

Orm. And whence does this young hero come?

Seb. From Catalonia. In the deserts there
His sire, obscure, though once a warrior, dwells.

Orm. From Catalonia! In the desert bred!—
Teresa! All that's possible I fear:
What if this youth——

Ter. O, think how many youths
[*To* ORMISINDA.
Of Spanish race in Catalonia dwell.
Be recollected whilst I ask Sebastian
A question that at once all doubt resolves.—
Has this youth no name? Hast' thou not heard
How he is call'd? [*To* SEBASTIAN.

Seb. He calls himself Alberto.

Orm. Mother of God!

Ter. [*To her.*] Beware!—The Princess grieves,
That Spain, deprived of great Alonzo's aid,
Should rest her safety on a stripling's arm.
[*To* SEBASTIAN.

Orm. No judge of warriors or of combats I;
But sure this youth, though ne'er so brave and bold,

Of tender years, who has not reach'd his prime,
Is most unfit to cope with strong Mirmallon.

Seb. Heroes must not be judged by common rules.

Irregular like comets in their course,
Who can compute the period when they shine?
Lady! if thou had'st seen this gallant youth,
If thou had'st heard him, when, obliged to speak
In self-defence, he told his wond'rous deeds,
As if he thought them nothing; thy faint heart
Would from his fire have caught the flame of hope;
Thou would'st, even as thy royal father did,
Believe he was created and ordain'd,
By Heaven supreme, the champion of his country.

Ter. Sebastian, go, and find this gallant youth.
Tell him, the Princess, partial to the brave,
Desires his presence.

Seb. Gladly I obey. [*Exit* SEBASTIAN.

Orm. He's gone. Now I may speak.—My son! my son!

My hope, my comfort, in despair and death!
The only star in my dark sky that shone!
Must thy unhappy mother live to see
Thy light extinguish'd? I will not permit

This most unequal combat. I'll proclaim
My fatal story, and declare his birth.

Ter. Think what must follow. Absolute perdition!

Orm. Is not his death perdition? Can he meet
The Moor and live? How should his tender youth
Resist the giant, who has overthrown
Squadrons entire, and trampled on the necks
Of firmest warriors?

Ter. 'Tis not yet decreed
That he shall fight the Moor. The stranger knight,
Who was at first mistaken for Alonzo,
Comes not so far, without a name in arms,
To gain the suffrage of the peers of Spain,
When once that name is known.

Orm. Teresa, no.
My fate has still one even tenor held,
From bad to worse. When I had framed my mind
To one disaster, then a greater came.
I had made death familiar to my thoughts;
I could embrace the spectre like a friend:
But still I kept a corner of my heart
Safe and untouch'd. My dearest child was there:

Amidst the ruins of the wife and queen,
The mother stood secure.—O thou, Alonzo!
If yet thine eyes behold the light of day,
What sorrow and remorse must be thy portion,
When thou shalt hear—Now promise me, Teresa,
That when my son and I are laid in dust,
(For each event accelerates our doom,)
Thou wilt seek out and find this cruel man;
Tell him how Spain, the kingdom of his fathers,
By him deserted, was for ever lost:
How his forsaken wife in honour died—
But that's not much—for me he will not mourn.
Then tell him of his son, to wring his heart!
Truly describe the boy! how brave he was!
How beautiful! how from the cloud obscure
In which his careful mother had involved him,
He burst the champion of his native land:
Then tell him how the springing hero fell
Beneath a stronger arm, fighting for Spain,
And for his mother; fighting with the foe
His father should have fought, and could have vanquish'd!

Ter. Sebastian comes.

Enter SEBASTIAN.

Seb. All is reversed again:
The stranger knight is for Abdallah known,
The Persian prince, Alonzo's chosen friend,
His only equal in the strife of arms.
To him the combat is decided.

Orm. I know
His story well; he is the Sophy's son,
The eldest born and Persia's rightful heir;
But by his mother's zeal a Christian bred:
True to his faith, he lost his father's throne.
What says he of Alonzo?

Seb. Sent by him,
The brave Abdallah comes to fight for Spain.
They march'd together, from the falls of Nile
To Damietta. There, a wound, received
In Asia's wars, broke out, and forced Alonzo,
Full of regret, in Egypt to remain.
His friend for him appears. The king, thy father,
With all his peers, in honour of the prince,
Go forth to meet him.

Orm. Hast thou seen Alberto?

Seb. I have, and told him what I had in charge;

Then hasten'd hither to report these tidings,
At which Alberto droops.

Ter. Return, I pray,
To my apartment guide the young Alberto.
The princess will be there. [*Exit* SEBASTIAN.
Did not I say,
Alonzo never would abandon Spain?
Abdalla comes to conquer in his name.
Now I can read the characters of fate,
And spell the will of Heaven. This boy of yours
Will win your husband back. When he beholds
The image of his valour so express,
His heart will melt. The husband and the father
Will rush upon him with a flood of joy.

Orm. Is he not like him? Mark his coming forth!
Behold Alonzo in his daring son!
Full of the spirit of his warlike sire,
His birth unknown, he felt his princely mind,
Advanced undaunted on the edge of war,
And claim'd the post of danger for his own.

Ter. A mother's tongue cannot exceed the truth
In praising him. There never was a prince,
Since old Iberia first excell'd in arms,
Broke out with so much lustre on mankind.

But in this interview with prudence check
The transport of affection from thy son.
Cautious conceal the secret of his birth,
Safest he is while to himself unknown.

Orm. How could his faithful guardian let him go?
Perhaps the brave Costollo lives no more.

Ter. Alberto will inform thee.

Orm. Not Alberto;
Alonzo is his name! I go to meet him. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE,—*A View of the Country near the City.*

Enter ABDALLA.

Abd. O, city! once the seat of all I loved!
O, hills and dales! haunts of my youthful days!
O, scenes well known! unalter'd you remain:
But I approach you with an alter'd mind,
Hate what I loved, and loath what I desired.
Intolerable state! My soul is void!
A chaos without form. Why, Nature, why
Art thou so watchful o'er the brutal tribes,
And yet so careless of the human race?
By certain instinct beasts and birds discern
Their proper food: For them the fairest fruit
Untouch'd, if pois'nous, withers on the bough:
But man, by a fair outside still deceived,
And by his boasted reason more betray'd,

Gives the affection of his soul to beauty,
Devours the deadly bane.

Enter VELASCO.

Vel. My lord, thy people,
Where thou commandedst, halt, and wait thy coming.

Abd. 'Tis well. I wish'd to speak with thee alone.—
Velasco! though to thee but little known,
I did in part reveal my secret soul,
Told thee the feign'd Abdallah was Alonzo,
Further than that, thou hast not sought to know,
Though many a lonely hour we two have worn
On sea and shore, that some men would have thought
Most opportune.

Vel. My lord, there are some men
Who having once been trusted with a little,
Avail themselves of that, some more to learn,
And penetrate the bosom of a friend,
Even with the wedge his easiness had furnish'd—
Such men should not be trusted.

Abd. True, Velasco;
But thou art not like them: I have observed thee,

Warm in affection, but in temper cool:
A steady judgment guides thee through the world.
Thy gen'rous mind pursues the path of honour,
Unbiass'd and unmoved.

Vel. From early youth,
The chosen confidant of my companions,
I never yet from perfidy betray'd,
From babbling vanity, divulged a secret.

Abd. I have a tale to tell, that will amaze,
Confound, and strike thee dumb. The deserts vast
Of Asia and of Africa have heard it;
The rocky cliffs of Caucasus and Atlas
Have echoed my complaints: But never yet
The human ear received them. Thou hast heard
Already more than ever mortal did.
Thou know'st the Princess?

Vel. Ormisinda?

Abd. Her.

Vel. Not many of the court have been more honour'd
With opportunities to know her worth;
And there is none who more her worth reveres.

Abd. Her worth! Thou may'st as well revere a fiend;
The blackest fiend, that dwells in burning hell,

Is not more opposite to all that's good
Than Ormisinda.

Vel. What a strain is this?

Abd. 'Tis true, by every high and holy name,
That binds a soldier's and a prince's vow:
I swear, Velasco, she's the vilest woman
That e'er disgraced her sex. The most abandon'd,
The hardiest, most determined in her vice,
That ever wrong'd a fond believing heart.

Vel. Great God!

Abd. You start and shudder like a man
Struck with a heavy blow.

Vel. And so I am.

Abd. And now you lift your eye-lids up, and stare
With looks full of conjecture and suspicion,
As if you doubted of my sober mind.
I am not mad, Velasco, though sometimes
I have been near, yes, very near to madness;
By that bad woman crazed.

Vel. O, would to Heaven
That this afflicting moment of my life
Were a delirious dream! Unreal all
That's heard and spoken now! But how, my lord,
Art thou so much affected by her crimes?

Abd. I am—her husband.

Vel. Heaven for that be praised!

Abd. How darest thou thus profane the name of Heaven,
And mock my misery? Thou art mad, I think;
The phrenzy which thou wished'st has come upon thee.
Beware! for if this ecstacy endures,
My sword secures thy silence.

Vel. O, forgive me,
Noble Alonzo! royal, I should say,
Doubly my master now. There's not a man,
Whose veins contain one drop of Spanish blood,
Who does not wish thee wedded to the princess.
And for her virtue! Thou hast long been absent,
And know'st not what an angel's life she leads!
Reserved, retired, and sad. I'll stake my soul,
Some villain has belied thy faithful wife,
And snared thy easy faith.

Abd. Take heed, take heed!
I am the villain who accuse the princess,
And thou shalt be her judge.

Vel. Eternal Power!
What shall I think of this?

Abd. Listen to me.
I have perplex'd thee, and have marr'd the story
By my abruptness. 'Tis a serious story,
Not to be told in parcels and by starts,
As I from impotence of mind began;
But I will bear my swelling passion down,
And utter all my shame.—Thou dost remember
How I was banish'd from my native land?
Vel. For killing young Ramirez.
Abd. At that time
I doated on the princess. She conjured me
With earnest prayers, with deluges of tears,
Not to resist her father, nor advance
My better title to the crown of Spain,
As I had once resolved. My rage she soothed;
Pride, anger, int'rest, yielded all to love.
With her I made a merit of obedience,
And pleaded so effectually my cause,
That she consented to a private marriage,
Before I left the kingdom. We were married,
And met together, four successive nights,
In the sequester'd cottage of the wood,
Behind the palace garden. O! I thought
Myself the happiest and the most beloved

Of all mankind. She mock'd me all the while;
Meant me the cover of her loose amours,
A cloak to hide her shame. O God! O God!
Did I deserve no better?

Vel. Good, my lord!

What circumstance to warrant such conclusion?
What evidence?

Abd. The evidence of sight—
Mine eyes beheld: I saw myself dishonour'd.

Vel. Your eyes beheld!

Abd. By heav'n and hell—they did.
The night preceding the appointed day
Of my departure from the realm of Spain,
I flew impatient to the place of meeting,
Before the hour was come. To wear away
The tedious time, for every minute seem'd
An age to me, I struck into the wood
And wander'd there, still steering to the gate
By which she was to enter. Through the trees,
The moon, full orb'd, in all her glory shone.
My am'rous mind a sportful purpose form'd,
Unseen to watch the coming of my bride,
And wantonly surprise her. Near the gate
There stood an aged tree. It was a beech,

Which far and wide stretch'd forth its level arms
Low, near the ground, and form'd a gloomy shade.
Behind its trunk I took my secret stand;
The gate was full in view, and the green path
On which it open'd. There I stood a while,
And soon I heard the turning of the key.
My heart beat thick with joy—and forth she came:—
Not as I wish'd. She had a minion with her;
A handsome youth was tripping by her side,
Girt with a sword, and dress'd in gay attire.
He seem'd to court her, as they pass'd along,
Coy, but not angry, for I heard her laugh.
She flung away. He follow'd, soon o'ertook her,
Embraced her——

Vel. Ah, the Princess Ormisinda!

Abd. I drew my sword, that I remember well,
And then an interval like death ensued.
When consciousness return'd, I found myself
Stretch'd at my length upon the naked ground
Under the tree: My sword lay by my side.
The sudden shock, the transport of my rage,
And grief, had stopt the current of my blood,
And made a pause of life.

Vel. Alas, my lord!

'Twas piteous indeed. What did'st thou do,
When life and sense return'd?

Abd. With life and sense,
My rage return'd. Stumbling with haste, I ran
To sacrifice them to my just revenge.
But whether they had heard my heavy fall,
Or that my death-like swoon had lasted long,
I know not, but I never saw them more.
I search'd till morning; then away I went,
Resolved to scorn the strumpet, and forget her.
But I have not been able to forget
Nor to despise her; though I hate her more
Than e'er I loved her, still her image haunts me
Where'er I go. I think of nothing else
When I'm awake, and never shut my eyes
But she's the certain vision of my dream.
Sometimes, in all her loveliness she comes,
Without her crimes: In ecstacy I wake,
And wish the vision had endured for ever.
For these deceitful moments, O! my friend,
Are the sole pleasant moments which Alonzo
For eighteen years has known.

Vel. Within that time,
What regions barbarous hast thou explored,

What strange vicissitudes of life endured
In action and repose!

Abd. Extremes of both
I courted, to relieve my tortured mind:
But the tormentor still my steps attends;
Behind me mounts, when through the ranks of war
I drive my fiery steed; and when I seek
The hermit's cell, the fiend pursues me there.
Time, which they say the wounds of passion cures
In other hearts, inflames and festers mine.
There's but one remedy.

Vel. Would I could name one!

Alb. Her life. The unction for the serpent's bite
Is the fell serpent's blood. I'll have her life.
Th' adultress with infamy shall die,
By public justice doom'd. With this intent
Disguised I come. If in my proper shape
I had appeared, alarmed she would have fled,
And baffled my revenge.

Vel. My lord, permit me
One thing to mention, which these eyes beheld,
Although it squares not just with thy opinion.

Abd. Opinion!

Vel. Good my lord! with patience hear.
When first I was to this employment named,
Which since I have so happily discharged,
The Princess sent and call'd me to her presence.
The treaty with the Moor engross'd her thoughts.
That sad and pensive air she always wears,
Was settled to a thicker gloom of grief.
Her voice was low and languid; few her words,
And the short periods ended with a sigh.
But when I gave her hopes of thy return,
A sudden gleam of joy spread o'er her face,
Like morning breaking in a cloudy sky.
With earnest voice, still rising as she spoke,
She urged dispatch, exhorted me to zeal
And perseverance; never to desist
Till I had found thee: For her fate, she said,
The fate of Spain, depended on Alonzo.
Her passion then burst in a flood of tears
That choak'd her utterance.

Abd. And thou didst believe
That every word she spoke was most sincere?
How to interpret her let me instruct thee.
Whate'er she utters with unusual warmth,
As the effusion genuine of her heart,

Receive and construe in another sense
Reverse and opposite; for that's the truth.
The words she spoke, her sighs, the tears she shed,
Were all from apprehension of my coming,
Not as they seem'd, for fear I should not come.
Vel. 'Tis dreadful that.
Abd. 'Tis horrible, 'tis monstrous!
When I for her had waived my right to reign,
The right undoubted of the Gothic line,
And stoop'd, enamour'd, to that base decree
From Spain, which banish'd the true heir of Spain,
That she should pitch on me to be her fool,
And pour such infinite contempt upon me.
But four days married! Fond, to madness fond!
And on the very eve of my departure!
She would not for a single day refrain,
But rush'd to prostitution!
Vel. I have heard
Stories and tales enough of female falsehood,
Some that were true, and others that were feign'd,
By spiteful wits maliciously devised,
But this surpasses all.
Abd. All wicked women,
Compared with her, are saints. She is a foil

To set them off, and make their foulness fair.
In her incontinence she stands unrivall'd,
Burning in fires peculiar to herself,
Phœnix in lewdness.

Vel. May I ask my lord,
How he intends?—But see, the king draws near.

Abd. He's much impaired.

Vel. When sore affliction comes
In the decline of life, 'tis like a storm,
Which, in the rear of autumn, shakes the tree
That frost had touch'd before; and strips it bare
Of all its leaves.

Enter the King, with Attendants.
[*As he advances, speaks to* VELASCO.]

King. We thank thy care, Velasco!
[*To* ABDALLAH.] Illustrious prince! whom love of glory brings
From regions so remote, to fight for Spain,
Accept the thanks a grateful nation pays
To her defender.

Abd. Monarch of Asturia!
The nations of the East have heard thy praise.
Had not the hand of time unstrung thine arm,

Spain never would have sought for foreign aid
To quell her foes.

King. 'Tis better far for Spain
That I am old: For in my warlike days,
When in the prime of flow'ring youth I fought,
I equall'd not thy friend. Above his own,
Above the strength of every mortal arm,
Alonzo thine exalts.

Abd. Three times we fought
With equal fortune on the Wolga's banks;
He for the Monguls, I against them stood.
But at our last encounter, on my helm
His faithless blade broke short, and in his hand
The useless hilt remain'd. My sword I dropt,
And in my arms the valiant chief embraced.
Our friendship thus commenced, and since that time
We have been brothers sworn, and leagued in arms.
Alonzo, fighting in my cause, received
That wound which now detains him from the field.
Urged by affection, and by honour bound,
For him I come against the foes of Spain.
But of myself more than enough is said;

'Tis time to act. The Moorish knight, I hear,
Is in the lists already.

King. Prince of Persia!
The terms to thee are known.

Abd. The first of men
With pride such honours might from Spain receive;
But never can these honours grace Abdallah.
Long since my heart and hand were given away;
And though the custom of the East permits
Unnumber'd consorts, me my faith restrains.
But if victorious in the strife of death,
I have an earnest and a just request
To thee, O king! which, at a proper time,
I shall be bold to make.

King. Whate'er it is,
I pledge my honour and my faith, to grant it.

Enter SEBASTIAN *and* ALBERTO.

[ALBERTO *goes to the King.*]

King. Advance, Alberto! to the prince himself,
Deliver thou thy message and the present.

Alb. Great sir! the Princess Ormisinda greets
The gen'rous champion of her country's cause,

Wishes that victory may sit to-day,
And ev'ry day of battle, on his sword.
This costly bracelet from her arm she sends
To Prince Abdallah, to Alonzo's friend.

Abd. [*Looking stedfastly on* ALBERTO.]
The Princess is most bountiful, as thou,
Who hast the honour to attend her, know'st.
Her gracious present humbly I accept,
And thank her for her goodness to Alonzo,
Who will be proud to be by her remember'd.
The combat ended, I propose to pay
My homage to her beauty. At this time
My mind is in the lists.—The Moorish knight
Will think me tardy. [*To the King.*

King. Let our trumpets sound
A sprightly charge. The warrior's heart beats time
To that brave music. Onward from this place
A path direct to thy pavilion leads.

[*The King turns and gives orders.*

Abd. [*To* VELASCO.] Another minion! View
him well, Velasco.
How insolent! See what a crest he rears,
Elated with her favour. O, vile woman!
Insatiate and inconstant.

Vel. Ah, my lord!
Truce with such thoughts! Sure this is not a time!
The combat claims a cool and present mind.
Abd. Fear not the combat.
Vel. Thou art waited for;
The king himself intends with thee to walk.

[*Exeunt.* ABDALLAH *looking back at* ALBERTO.

Manent ALBERTO, SEBASTIAN.

Alb. That Prince of Persia is composed of pride;
He did not deign to look upon the present,
But stretch'd his sun-burnt hand straight out before him,
Like a blind man, and would have stood so still,
Had I not made his fingers feel the pearls.
And all the while he stared me in the face,
As if he meant to oppress me with his eye,
And fright me with his fierce and uncouth looks.
I blush'd at first, but anger came at last,
And bore me up.
Seb. Those Princes of the East,
Used to the servile manners of their country,
Where every prostrate slave adores his lord,

Without intention shock the sons of Europe.

Alb. O! how unlike to him the King of Spain,
And that most gentle Princess, Ormisinda!
Her look, her voice, benign and mild, dispel
The awe her rank inspires, and reassure
The modest mind. Would'st thou believe, Sebastian,
She talk'd to me, I cannot tell how long,
Before thou cam'st, and question'd me minutely
How I had lived, how past my youthful days?
I fear I was too copious in my answers.
What signifies my rural life to her?
And yet she seem'd to listen with delight,
As if she had an interest in my fate;
And once or twice, when I of danger spoke,
From which I hardly had escaped with life,
Methought I saw her tremble. Much she blamed
My rashness; yet she praised my courage too.
With all her tenderness of heart, I see
That she admires true valour.

Seb. So she does.
The bravest knight that e'er was clad in steel,
Alonzo, was the lover of her youth:
And since he left this land she ne'er rejoiced.

But of these matters I will tell thee more
At a convenient season. Let us follow,
And join the train before they reach the lists.

Alb. I would not lose one moment of this sight
For half the lands of Spain. Though I abhor
The Persian, yet I pray devoutly for him.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE,—*The City.*

Enter ORMISINDA *and* TERESA.

Ormis. This city looks as if a pestilence
Had swept the whole inhabitants away.
The solitary streets, the empty squares,
Appal me more than the deserted palace.
Let us go back again.

Ther. 'Tis time we should.
You trembled at the howling of a dog,
That broke the silence and increased the horror.
If we stay here we shall be fancy-struck,
Mistake some statue for a pale-faced ghost,
And think it beckons with its marble arm.

Ormis. Why should this desolation frighten me?
Why should I fear to see a grave-clad ghost,
Who may so soon be number'd with the dead,

And be myself a ghost?—What noise is that?
Didst thou not hear, Teresa?

Ter. Yes, I did,
I heard an uncouth sound.

Ormis. Uncouth indeed!
An universal groan!—Hark! there again.

Ter. 'Tis not the same. This has another tone,
A shout of triumph and a burst of joy.

Ormis. The combat's over, and my fate's determined.
Now death or life! [*The trumpets sound.*

Ter. Long may the Princess live,
And every hour be fortunate as this!
The Spanish trumpets sound, the sign I know.
Thy champion has prevail'd.
The lists are near, and we shall quickly learn.

Ter. Look yonder, flying swifter than the wind,
A horseman comes; now at the gate he lights,
And hastes across the square. It is Sebastian.
His look, his gesture, speak his tidings good.

Enter SEBASTIAN.

Seb. Joy to the princess! Victory and peace!
The Moor is slain by brave Abdallah's hand.

Orm. Blest be thy tongue, Sebastian! Thou shalt find
Some better recompence than barren thanks
For these glad tidings. But the gen'rous prince
Who fought for Spain——

Seb. Safe and without a wound,
Fresh for another foe, Abdallah stands.
Short was the combat: Soon the boaster fell,
Who durst defy the Christian world to arms.

Ormis. The God of battles, whom Abdallah serves,
Has overthrown the infidel, whose trust
Was in his own right arm.

Seb. If I should live
Ten thousand years, I never could forget
The solemn prelude and the fierce encounter.
Thou know'st the place appointed for the combat,
An amphitheatre by nature form'd.

Ormis. I know it well.

Seb. The hills, of various slope
And shape, which circle round the spacious plain,
Were cover'd with a multitude immense
Of either sex, of every age and rank,
Christian and Moor; whose faces and attire

Strangely diversified the living scene.
Within the lists a gallery was raised,
In which thy father and the Moorish prince
Sat with their peers, the judges of the field.
To them the knights with slow and stately pace
Approach'd; and, bound by sacred oaths, declared
That they no charm nor incantation used,
But trusted in their valour and their arms.
With low obeisance then they both fell back;
And first the Moor (for he the challenge gave)
March'd to the middle of the listed field;
There seized his ponderous mace, beneath whose weight,
The brawny bearer bow'd; and round his head,
Like a light foil, he flourish'd it in air.
On him with different thoughts the nations gazed.
But suddenly a flash of light and flame
Struck ev'ry eye from brave Abdallah's shield,
Cover'd till then. 'Twas made of polish'd steel,
Which shone like adamant; and to a point
Rose in the centre, slanting on each side.
This shield, the Persian Prince, advancing, bore,
On his left arm outstretch'd, and in his right,
Thrown back a little, gleam'd a pointed sword.
Erect and high the bold Mirmallon stood,

And sternly eyed his near-approaching foe ;
Then forward sprung, and on the flaming shield
Discharged a mighty blow, enough to crush
A wall, or split a rock. The Spaniards gave
A general groan.

Ormis. That was the dreadful sound
We heard, Teresa.

Seb. Glancing from the shield,
Aside the mace descended. Then enraged,
Once more the Moor his thund'ring weapon rear'd.
In stept the Prince, and raising high his shield,
Midway he met the blow ; and with the strength
And vigour of his arm, obliquely down
The pond'rous mace he drove. Then quick as thought,
His better hand and foot at once advancing,
Plunged in Mirmallon's throat his thirsty blade.
The giant stagger'd for a little space ;
Then, falling, shook the earth. The Christians raised
A shout that rent the air. Away I came,
Happy to be the bearer of such tidings.

[*Trumpet.*

Ormis. Behold, they come in triumph from the field.
O glorious man ! And yet forgive me, heaven,

I grudge the conquest to Alonzo's friend,
And wish Alonzo in Abdallah's place.

Enter the King, ABDALLAH, VELASCO, ALBERTO, *&c.*

Abd. [*To* VELASCO.] See where she stands. O heavens!

Vel. My lord Alonzo,
Compose thy thoughts.

Abd. Behold her how she looks,
As if she knew no ill. That harden'd heart
Against remorse, and fear, and shame is arm'd;
But I shall wring it now.

King. Daughter, draw near!
This godlike Prince all recompence disclaims,
Save thanks from Spain. The pleasing task be thine
To greet the saviour of thy native land,
And speak our gratitude.

Ormis. No words can speak
The gratitude I feel. Believe it great
As my deliverence, vast as my distress!
Like sad Andromeda, chain'd to the rock,
I stood a living prey, when this brave Prince

Came, like another Perseus from the sky,
And saved me from destruction. I forget,
Wrapt in myself, the charge my father gave
To thank the saviour of my native land;
Another voice shall give thee thanks for Spain,
Alonzo's voice shall thank thee for his country,
His friends, his people—saved.

Abd. Ah! if I hear
This syren longer, she will charm my rage;
But I remember where I heard her last.— [*Aside.*
Princess of Spain, I merit not thy praise.
Sent by Alonzo, to this land I came:
What has been done, for him I have perform'd.
Now of his promise I remind the king,
To grant me one request.

King. Speak! It is granted.

Ormis. If I conjecture right, even that request
Will prove one favour more on Spain conferr'd.

Abd. Perhaps it may.

King. Proceed, illustrious Prince!
And make me happy to fulfill thy wish.

Abd. Not for myself I speak, but for my friend;
And in his name, whose person I sustain,
I ask for justice on a great offender.

King. Thou shalt have ample and immediate justice.
Nor favour nor affinity shall screen
The guilty person.—Prince, why art thou troubled?
Thou shak'st from head to foot. Thy quiv'ring lip
Is pale with passion. On thy forehead stand
Big drops. Almighty God! What dreadful birth
Do these strong pangs portend?

Abd. The guilty person,
Whom with a capital offence I charge,
Stands by thy side.

King. My daughter!

Abd. Yes, thy daughter!
'Tis her I mean, the Princess Ormisinda.
Here in the presence of the peers of Spain,
I charge her with a crime, whose doom the laws
Of Spain have wrote in blood: Adultery.
I read astonishment in ev'ry face!
Who would suspect that one so highly born,
With ev'ry outward mark of virtue graced,
Had given her honour to a worthless wretch,
And driven a noble husband to despair!

King. Am I awake! Is this the light of day?
Art thou, O Prince! with sudden phrenzy seized?
Or is the madness mine? Renown'd Abdallah!

What answer can be made to such a charge?
This strange demand of justice on my daughter,
For an offence that she could not commit?
My daughter ne'er was married.

Abd. Ask her that!

Hear if she will deny she has a husband!

King. My child, thou art amazed!

Ormis. No, not so much
As thou wilt be, my father, when thou hear'st
Thy daughter's tongue confess she has a husband.

King. Hast thou a husband? God of heaven and earth!
Since thou hast thus dissembled with thy father,
Perhaps thou hast deceived thy husband too.
Who is thy husband? Speak!

Orm. The Prince Alonzo.

King. And hast thou been so long in secret wedded?
'Tis eighteen years since he departed hence.

Ormis. O! I have reason to remember that.
There is no calendar so just and true
As the sad mem'ry of a wife forsaken.
The years, the months, the weeks, the very days,
Are reckon'd, register'd, recorded there!

And of that period I could cite such times,
So dolorous, distressful, melancholy,
That the bare mention of them would excite
Amazement how I live to tell the tale.
But I forget the present in the past.
No wonder, for this moment is the first
That opes the sluices of a heart o'ercharged,
And bursting with a flood of grief conceal'd.
But I must turn me to another theme.
The earnest eyes of all are bent on me,
Watching my looks, and prying to discern
Symptoms of innocence or signs of guilt.
Hear then the frank confession of my soul:—
I have transgress'd.

King. Stain of a noble race!
Dost thou avow thy crime?

Ormis. Mistake me not,
I have transgress'd my duty to my father:
Without his knowledge, and against his will,
Moved by a tender lover's parting tears,
I join'd myself in wedlock to Alonzo.
My king, my father, pardon the offence
Which against thee I own I have committed:
But may I ne'er of God or man be pardon'd,
Nor friend nor father ever pity me,

If I have swerved one step from virtue's path,
Or broke the smallest parcel of that vow
Which binds a faithful wife!—O Prince of Persia
Thou art the best of friends and benefactors;
Thou comest to end my most distracting woes,
And to dispel the impenetrable cloud
That darken'd all my days. Now I shall know
Why I have been abandon'd and forsaken,
Why I have been detested and despised,
As never woman was. Proceed, my lord.
And whilst thou keenly dost assail my life,
And, dearer far, my honour and my fame,
Secure in innocence, I'll calmly hear.
From thee, I hope the end of all my cares.

Abd. Even thus Alonzo told me she would speak,
And thus proclaim her innocence.

Ormis. Did he?
O! would to heaven Alonzo heard me now,
Fearless defend his honour and my own!
My voice, which once was music to his ear,
Like David's harp which sooth'd the gloomy king,
Would charm his malady, would drive away
The evil spirit, and call back again
The better genius of his earlier days.

O! thou that wert so good, so great, admired
Of all mankind, my loved, my lost Alonzo!
For thee, in this humiliating hour,
More than myself I mourn.

Abd. [*Half aside.*] Eternal Power!
To whom the secrets of all hearts are known!
Hear, hear this woman, and between us judge!
'Tis not my business to contend with words,
These are the conquering arms of womankind.
A nobler course of trial lies before me:
In a wrong'd husband's name, I charge this lady
With infidelity; and crave the doom
Of law upon her head. If any knight,
Spaniard or stranger, dares assert her cause,
Let him stand forth, and take my gauntlet up;
Which on the ground I throw, my gage to prove
That she is false to honour and Alonzo.

Ormis. Before the gage of death is lifted up,
Hear me one moment. By Alonzo sent,
Thou com'st instructed in Alonzo's wrongs.
Let me conjure thee then, by all that's dear,
By all that's sacred to the great and brave,
Thy mother's memory, thy consort's fame,
Not on a general charge, obscure and vague,
To which there is no answer but denial,

To found the claim of combat: Single out
What circumstance thou wilt of special note,
Of such a kind as may be tried and known
For true or false. Tell us at least his name
With whom Alonzo's wife her honour stain'd,
And let us be confronted.

[*Young* ALBERTO *steps forth.*

Alb. Heaven forbid
That thou shouldst be confronted with a villain,
Princess of Spain! Be sure some wretch there is,
Some renegado, false to God and man,
Suborn'd, and ready with a lying tongue,
To second this brave prince who wrongs thy fame,
And wounds thy modest ear. 'Too much by far
Already thou hast heard.—Pretended prince
For there is nothing royal in thy soul!
Thou base defamer of a lady's name!
I take thy gauntlet up, and hold it high
In scorn, and fierce defiance, to thy face,
My gage to prove thy accusation false,
And thee, the author of a tale invented
To rob a noble lady of her fame.

Ormis. Where am I now? What shall I do,
Teresa? [*Aside.*

Ter. The God of heaven direct thee!

Abd. Boy! to thee
I answer nothing. I suspect the cause
Of thy presumption, and could wish that Spain
Had given a worthier victim to my sword.
[*Walks aside.*

Ormis. O, valiant youth! much am I bound to thee:
But I have reasons that import the state,
Which shall, whatever is my fate, be known,
And own'd hereafter to be great and weighty,
Why I decline the assistance of thy sword.
If this appeal to combat is the law,
And I can find no champion but Alberto,
Without the chance of combat let me fall,
For I will not accept——

Alb. Recall these words,
Too gen'rous princess! I can read thy thoughts:
Thou think'st my youth unequal to the foe;
Thou fear'st the weakness of Alberto's arm.
My strength exceeds the promise of my years.
Oft have I bent the bow, and drawn the sword,
Nor fly my shafts, nor falls my sword in vain.
This day against a troop alone I fought;
But never did I fight in such a cause,
Nor was I e'er so certain to prevail.

A fire divine invades my zealous breast:
I feel the force of legions in mine arm.
Thy innocence has made thy champion strong!
The God of battle is our righteous judge;
And let the cause be tried.

A Warrior armed, with his helmet on, steps forth.

War. But not by thee!
Thy father's voice forbids, too daring youth;
Stand back, and let thy master in the art
Of war, now claim the combat for his own.—
My liege!

King. That voice I know; Thy figure too
Resembles much a chief, lamented long
As slain in battle.

War. I am he, Costollo.
'Tis true, O king! that on the field I fell,
Fighting for Spain. How I was saved from death,
And where, for many years, I have remain'd,
This is no time to tell. This hour demands
A soldier's speech, brief prologue to his deeds.—
On me, proud Persian! turn thy gloomy eyes;
Hear me, and let thy ready sword reply.
With hell-born malice, levell'd at her life,
Thou hast defamed a princess, honour'd, loved,

By all, who virtue or fair honour love.
The fell hyæna, native of thy land,
Has not a voice or heart more false than thine,
Thou counterfeit of truth! whom I defy
To mortal combat, and the proof of arms.
Thy full-blown fame, thy unexhausted strength,
Deceitful confidence, I laugh to scorn;
The conquering cause is mine.

Alb. My lord, the king!
And ye his counsellors for wisdom famed!
You will not sure permit the good old man,
By fond affection for his son impell'd,
To meet so stern a foe. His hoary head,
His wither'd veins, are symptoms of decay.
Lean not upon a reed which time hath bruised,
Nor trust the life and honour of the Princess
To the weak arm of age.

Abd. I'll fight you both,
Father and son at once. Together come,
Tongue-valiant men! and try Abdallah's arm.
I'll have it so; for both of you have dared,
Ignoble as you are, to match yourselves
Against a prince who moves not in your sphere,
And utter words for which such blood as yours
Is poor atonement.

Cos. Every word thou speak'st
Is insolent and false. Son of a slave!
For Eastern monarchs buy with gold their brides,
The blood by thee despised, flows from a source
Purer than thine and nobler.

Alb. Nay, my father!
That's said too far.—Fierce and disdainful prince,
Vain is the offer which thy passion makes.
Perhaps the conqu'ror of the Moor may find
One Spaniard is enough.

Cos. A father's right
Unmoved I claim, and with determined voice
Forbid the combat.

King. Hence let us retire
To the pavilion. There our peers shall judge
Of your pretensions.

[*Exeunt King and Spaniards.*

Abd. Come with me, Velasco.

[*Exeunt* ABDALLAH *and* VELASCO.

Manent ORMISINDA *and* TERESA.

Ormis. My thoughts are of my son. Mine own estate
Is desperate. The husband whom I loved,
On whom I doated, and from whom I suffer'd,

What never woman with such patience bore,
Conspires against my honour and my life.
Long cherish'd hope, farewell!
Ter. To guard thy son
Defend thyself; and, to prevent the combat,
In thy demand persist. Call the accuser
To circumstance of proof. That is the thread
To lead us through this labyrinth perplex'd.
Nor has the Persian thy demand refused.
Ormis. He had not time to speak. Alberto's voice
Broke in like thunder in his mother's cause.
Amidst the anguish of my tortured heart,
My soul exults, Teresa, in my son!
When in the pride of valour forth he came,
And for my sake defied the bold Abdallah,
His look (he seem'd a cherub in my eyes!)
His voice (at every word my bosom yearn'd!)
Transported me so much, that I forgot
His state and mine, and had well nigh sprung forth
To clasp my blooming hero in my arms.
Ter. No wonder that his mother's soul was moved!
His brave demeanour the spectators charm'd.

Valour, which sheds a glory round the head
Of age and ruggedness; how bright its beams
When in the lovely front of youth they shine!

Ormis. I have heard of strange and perilous essays
To try the pureness of suspected virtue.
I'll undergo whate'er can be devised.
By ordeal trial let my faith be proved.
Blindfold, barefooted, on the smoaking soil,
With red-hot plough-shares spread, I'll walk my way;
Plunge in the boiling oil my naked arm,
But will not risk my young Alonzo's life.
The Moorish host hangs o'er our heads no more.
The heir of Spain shall for himself be known,
Alonzo's son.

Ter. He will not be allow'd
Alonzo's son, nor yet the heir of Spain,
Whilst slander's breath sullies his mother's fame.

Ormis. Now thou hast touch'd a string, to whose deep sound
A mother's heart replies. My son! my son!
I weigh thy virtues down, hang on thy life,
Attaint thy blood, thy birth, thy right to reign!
The birds of prey that dwell among the rocks,

The savage beasts that through the deserts roam,
The monsters of the deep, their offspring love,
And to preserve their lives devote their own.
Athwart the gloom, I see a flash of light,
That opens the horizon. I descry
A hand that points a high and lofty path,
Which I will boldly tread. Now to my father.
Upon my knees his aid I'll first implore.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE,—*The City, as before.*

ABDALLAH *and* VELASCO.

Vel. Before this day she ne'er beheld the boy.
Far from this place, in Catalonia bred,
He came to see the famous combat fought.
'Twas he, my lord, who slew the Moorish chief,
And in his own defence such wonders wrought.
That action to the Princess made him known,
The rest in honour of his valour follow'd.

Abd. How dost thou know?

Vel. With admiration struck,
When he stood forth, and braved a foe, like thee,
Of divers persons curious I inquired,
Who, and from whence he was.

Abd. Pity it were
To hurt the stripling. 'Tis a noble boy.

I love the outbreak of his Spanish fire
Against the Moors.

Vel. Ay, and against Abdallah,
Whom ancient fame and recent glory raised
Above all mortal men. Spare this young plant,
Who makes so fair a shoot.

Abd. How can I spare him?
Should their election send him to my sword,
How, good Velasco?

Vel. When the peers return,
The king, the princess, with their champion chosen,
Then to the wond'ring audience, in the face
Of her that's guilty, let my lord relate
The truth-mark'd story he to me has told.
Detected thus, confounded and surprised,
Pierced with a thousand eyes, that gaze upon her,
And dart conviction; can she still deny,
And by denial, make her guilt ambiguous?
But if her sex's genius is so strong,
That she the port of innocence maintains,
And, from the fulness and excess of vice,
Derives a boldness, that may look like virtue,
Then let the sword decide.

Abd. What you propose
Is worth the trial. I am loth to spill

The young Alberto's or Costollo's blood:
For they deserve no harm. Even you, my friend,
Before my hand unclasp'd the book of shame,
Her champion would have been.

Vel. Against the world.

Abd. I will adopt the counsel of Velasco,
And probe more deeply still her fester'd mind.
I see 'tis better that she should confess
Her guilt, than with her vanquish'd champion fall,
By doom of law, protesting to the last
Her innocence.

Vel. Better a thousand times.
Her dying voice would shake the hearts of men,
And echo through the world.

Abd. Behold the king,
And young Alberto marching by his side,
As if he trod on air.

Vel. See, Ormisinda
With folded hands implores her listening sire.

Enter the King, ORMISINDA, TERESA, ALBERTO, COSTOLLO, *&c.*

King. The peers of Spain have judged. Stand forth, Alberto!
Behold the champion of my daughter's fame.

Alb. Before the trumpet's voice unsheaths the sword,
Which one of us shall never sheath again,
Permit me, Prince of Persia, to entreat
A moment's audience. Not from fear I speak.
The cause I fight for, and the mind I bear,
Exalt me far above the thoughts of danger;
But from a conscious sense of what is due
To thee, renown'd Abdallah. In the heat
Of our contention, if my tongue has utter'd
One word offensive to thy noble ear,
Which might have been omitted, and the tone
Of firm defiance equally preserved,
For that I ask forgiveness.

Abd. Less I mark'd
The manner than the matter of thy speech:
If thou dost need forgiveness, freely take it.

King. 'Twas generously ask'd, and nobly granted:
Such courtesy with valour ever dwells.
Let me too crave for a few words thine ear.
Throughout the trying bus'ness of this day,
Thou art my witness, that my mind upright
Has never been by powerful nature bent,
Nor sway'd to favour and opinion form'd,

By long habitual and accustom'd love;
But I with equal hand the balance held
Between thee and my child.

Abd. Thou hast indeed.
It is but justice that I should declare it.

King. Then to thy candour let me now appeal,
And beg of thee to grant me one request,
Which I do not, but might, perhaps, command.

Abd. What is it?

King. I have search'd my hapless child,
Even to the pith and marrow of her soul,
Have touch'd her to the quick. She never shrinks
Nor wavers in the least. Perhaps, my lord,
Some fool officious, or some wretch that's worse,
(If there is aught comes between man and wife
That's more pernicious than a meddling fool,).
Some false designing friend has wrong'd her fame,
And pour'd his poison in Alonzo's ear.
If thou wilt give some scope to her defence,
And bring the charge from darkness into light,
Then she shall forthwith answer on the spot
Where now she stands before us.

Ormis. If I fail
To clear my fame even in Abdallah's sight;

If but one dark suspicious speck remains
To make mine honour dim, let me be held
Guilty of all. Before-hand I renounce
The right of combat, and submit to die.

Abd. Thy wish is fatal, but it shall be granted,
This instant too.

Ormis. Blessings upon thy head!
Ten thousand blessings! O, thou dost not know
How happy thou hast made me! On my breast
A mountain lay. Thy hand has heaved it off,
And now I breathe again.

Abd. O woman, woman!
A little way from hence my people wait;
With them remains a necessary witness.
Thither I go, and quickly will return
To ring thy knell. [*Exit* ABDALLAH.

Ormis. The knell of all my woes!
My heart knocks at my side, as if 'twould burst
Itself a passage outwards. Yet a while,
Poor suff'ring heart, and thou shalt beat no more.
Shortly for what I am I shall be known,
Then let my doom be squared to my desert
Without indulgence.

King. I can trust thee, now:

Thine eye secure beams innocence and honour.
Thou art my daughter still.

Alb. I fear, O king!
Some practice vile, some infamous imposture,
Supported by false witness. Still I wish
The fair decision of the honest sword.

Enter ABDALLAH, *in a Spanish dress, as* ALONZO.

King. God of my soul! What mockery is this?
Unless my eyes deceive me, 'tis Alonzo.

Ormis. My husband! Ah!

[*Runs to embrace him, he repulses her.*

Alon. Away, thy husband's shame,
Shame to thy sex, reproach of womankind!

Ormis. O, shield me, heaven! Abdallah was Alonzo.

Alon. To heaven appeal not.

Ormis. I appeal to heaven,
Justice on earth will come too late for me.

King. [*To* ALONZO.] Hast thou no other witness than thyself?

Alon. I have no other, and none else require.

King. Unfeeling man, to trifle with our sorrows,

And like a pageant play a mimic scene:
This is thy hatred of Pelagio's house,
Thy passion to confound a rival race.
Would I were young again!

Alb. [*To* ALONZO.] Defend thyself.
I can no longer hold me from thy breast.

Vel. Sound, trumpet, sound! and heaven defend the right!

Alon. His blood be on your heads.

[*Drawing his sword.*

[ORMISINDA *throws herself between their swords.*

Ormis. Hold!—Strike through me!
You know not what you do, unhappy both!
This combat must not, nor it shall not be.
The sun in heaven would backward turn his course,
And shrink from such a spectacle as this,
More horrid than the banquet of Thyestes.
You have no quarrel. I'll remove the cause.
A Roman matron, to redeem her fame,
Before her husband's and her father's eyes
Plunged in her breast the steel.

[*Stabs herself, and falls.*

King. O, desperate deed!
What fury urged thy hand?

Ormis. Condemn me not.
There was no other way to save—but that
Must not as yet be told. My husband! hear
My dying voice! my latest words believe,
Whose truth my blood hath seal'd. I'm innocent.
As I for mercy hope at that tribunal
Where I shall soon appear, I never wrong'd thee.
When that is manifest, remember me
As love like mine deserved, and to this youth,
Who is——

Alon. Who is this youth?—All-seeing God!
A secret horror comes upon my soul—
Who is this youth?

Ormis. He is thy son.

Alon. My son!

Ormis. Whom thy forsaken wife in sorrow bore,
And gave in secret to Costollo's care.

Alb. Art thou my mother! Dost thou die for me?

Ormis. I die with pleasure to be just to thee.
O! if that Power which did inspire my soul
To rush between your swords, would let me live,
To prove my innocence! Alonzo, speak!
Whilst I have breath to answer.

Alon. Though disarm'd
And soften'd, even if guilty to forgive thee,
Thy solemn call I instantly obey.
That night appointed for our last farewell,
That fatal night for ever curst—thou know'st
What happen'd then.

Ormis. I know thou didst not come,
Forlorn thou left'st me.

Alon. Thou wast not forlorn,
In the dark wood with thee there was a youth.

Ormis. [*After a pause.*] O heaven and earth! a youth! It was Teresa.

Alon. Teresa!

Ter. Yes, that memorable night,
My brother's sword and helmet plumed I wore.

Alon. Great God! the snares of hell have caught my soul.

Ter. The night before, the Princess, as she went,
Was fright'ned in the wood, and I assumed
That warlike form, to seem——

Alon. No matter why!
I saw thee then, and thought thee what thou seem'd'st.

King. She's innocent; like gold tried in the fire,
Her honour shines: Would I had died for thee!
[*To* ORMISINDA.

Ormis. Why didst thou never till this moment speak? [*To* ALONZO.

Alon. Because I am born and destined to perdition.
Had I a voice like Ætna when it roars,
For in my breast is pent as hot a fire,
I'd speak in flames.

Ormis. My lord!

Alon. Do not forgive me.
Do not oppress me with such tender looks:
I will not be forgiven.

[ORMISINDA *raising herself and stretching out her arms.*

Ormis. Come to my arms,
And let me sooth thine anguish! Had I been
What I to thee appear'd, thy rage was just.
A Spaniard's temper, and a Prince's pride,
A lover's passion, and a husband's honour,
Prompted no less.

Alon. Hear, men and angels, hear!

Let me fall down and worship.

[*Throws himself down into her arms.*

Oh, I loved thee!
I loved thee all the while, to madness loved.

Ormis. My husband, dear as ever to my heart!
In my last moments dear!

Alon. My heart is torn.
My head, my brain! How blest I might have been!
With such a wife, with such a son!

Ormis. To him
Pay all the debt of love thou owest to me.
Embrace thy son before mine eyes are closed:
Let me behold him in his father's arms.

Alon. Thou brave defender of thy mother's fame!

Ormis. He's gentle too; his soul dissolves in grief.

Alon. My fault'ring tongue dares scarcely call thee son.
Canst thou endure the touch of such a father?

Alb. My bursting heart, amidst its grief, is proud
Of such a father. Let me clasp thy knees,
And help to reconcile thee to thyself.

[*They embrace.*

Ormis. This pleasing sight subdues the pains of death—
My son!
Alb. My mother, oh!
Ormis. My dearest husband——
Alon. What would'st thou say? Alas! thine eye grows dim;
Thy voice begins to fail.
Ormis. Remember me
When I am dead; remember how I loved you.
And thou, Alonzo, live to guard thy son,
To fix the Spanish sceptre in—— '
[*Dies, looking at her son.*
[ALONZO *remains silent, with his eyes fixed upon* ORMISINDA.
Alb. My father!
Under thy gather'd brows I see despair:
Have pity on thy son, who lived so long
In total ignorance of what he was;
Who has already seen one parent die,
And for the sad survivor trembles now.
My mother's last request!
Alon. I'm mindful of it,
And to her sacred memory will be just.

Hang not on me, my son! go to the king,
And pay thy duty there.
[*The King embraces* ALBERTO.
King. My child, my all!
I loved thee at first sight.
Alon. 'Tis well; 'tis well.
The good old king hath still some comfort left.
Now is my time.— [*Draws his sword.*
Oft have I struck with thee,
But never struck a foe with better will
Than now myself. [*Stabs himself and falls.*
Vel. Cost. Alas!
[ALBERTO *turning.*] *Alb.* 'Twas this I fear'd.
Alon. There was good cause to fear. I would have lived
For thee, if I with honour could have lived.
My son! thy fathers were renown'd in arms:
The valour of our warlike race is thine:
But guard against the impulse of their blood.
Take warning by my fate.
King. Thou might'st have lived,
Renown'd Alonzo; even I forgave
And pitied thee.
Alon. I am more just than thou—

For I did not forgive, nor would I live
Upon the alms of other men, their pity.—
Farewell, my son!—O, Ormisinda! stay
Till I o'ertake thee. [*Dies.*

King. [*To* ALBERTO.] Dwell not on this sight,
Prince of Asturia! leave the scene of sorrow.

[*Exeunt.*

EPILOGUE,

WRITTEN BY MR GARRICK.

SPOKEN BY MRS BARRY.

THOUGH lately dead, a Princess, and of Spain,
I am no ghost, but flesh and blood again!
No time to change this dress, it is expedient
I pass for British, and your most obedient.

How happy, ladies, for us all—that we,
Born in this Isle, by Magna Charta free,
Are not, like Spanish wives, kept under lock and key!
The Spaniard, now, is not like him of yore,
Who in his whisker'd face his titles bore!
Nor joy, nor vengeance, made him smile or grin,
Fix'd were his features, though the devil within!
He, when once jealous, to wash out the stain,
Stalk'd home, stabb'd madam, and stalk'd out again.
Thanks to the times, this dagger-drawing passion,
Through polish'd Europe, is quite out of fashion.
Signor th' Italian, quick of sight and hearing,
Once ever list'ning, and for ever leering,
To Cara Sposa now politely kind,
He, best of husbands, is both deaf and blind.
Mynheer, the Dutchman, with his sober pace,
Whene'er he finds his rib has wanted grace,
He feels no branches sprouting from his brain,
But calculation makes of loss and gain;

And when to part with her, occasion's ripe,
Mynheer turns out mine Frow, and smokes his pipe.
When a brisk Frenchman's wife is given to prancing,
It never spoils his singing or his dancing:
Madame, you false—*de tout moun cœur*—Adieu;
Begar you *cocu* me, I *cocu* you—
He, *toujours gai*, dispels each jealous vapour,
Takes snuff, sings *vive l' amour*, and cuts a caper.
As for John Bull—not he in upper life,
But the plain Englishman, who loves his wife;
When honest John, I say, has got his doubts,
He sullen grows, scratches his head, and pouts.
What is the matter with you, love? cries she;
Are you not well, my dearest? Humph! cries he:
You're such a brute!—But, Mr Bull, I've done:
And if am a brute—Who made me one?
You know my tenderness—My heart's too full—
And so's my head—I thank you, Mrs Bull.
O you base man!—Zounds, madam, there's no bearing,—
She falls a weeping, and he falls a swearing.
With tears and oaths, the storm domestic ends,
The thunder dies away, the rain descends,
She sobs, he melts, and then they kiss and friends.
Whatever ease these modern modes may bring,
A little jealousy is no bad thing:
To me, who speak from nature unrefined,
Jealousy is the bellows of the mind.
Touch it but gently, and it warms desire,
If handled roughly, you are all on fire!
If it stands still, affection must expire!
This truth, no true philosopher can doubt,
Whate'er you do, let not the flame go out.

ALFRED;

A

TRAGEDY.

——*Lectori credere mavult.*——

HORACE.

PREFACE.

THE success of a dramatic piece on the stage, depends, says Voltaire, upon accidental circumstances, but the day of publication decides its fate.

Persuaded of the truth of this remark, the Author of the Tragedy of Alfred would have submitted his performance to the final judgment of the reader, without preface or apology, if he had not been advised, and indeed urged, to make a reply to some hostile criticisms, which appear to have been founded upon prejudice and opinion, rather than reason and argument.

It has been alleged, that the character of Alfred, in the Tragedy, does not agree with the character of Alfred in history: "that the hero, the legislator, is degraded to a lover, who enters the Danish camp, from a private, not a public motive, and acts the part of an impostor."

In tragedy, if the subject be historical, an author is not permitted to introduce events, contrary to the great established facts of history; for instance, in the Tragedy of *Alfred*, the hero must not be killed, nor driven out of England by the Danes; but, preserving those ancient foundations, as the piers of his bridge, the author may bend his arches, and finish the fabric, according to his taste and fancy; for the poet is at liberty, and it is the essence of his art, to invent such intermediate circumstances, and incidents, as he thinks will produce the most affecting situations. In this department, the poet's fancy is controuled by nothing, but probability, and consistence of character;—the barriers of dramatic truth. Let us apply this principle to the point in dispute.

Alfred was a young man, when he fought the battle of Ethendune. The victory, which gave him possession of the kingdom, must have been gained before he begun to model the state. Is it improbable to suppose, that a young hero was in love? Is it inconsistent to represent the person, who was a legislator when advanced in years, as a lover in his youth? Does it degrade the character of a hero to suppose, that he was in love with the Princess,

whom he afterwards married? Is it not rather injurious to his heroism to conclude, that he chose a consort whom he did not love? If this reasoning is just, there will be no difficulty in vindicating the subsequent conduct of the hero. The dramatic and the real Alfred, are both involved in the charge of imposture; both enter the Danish camp in disguise; the previous events, as narrated in the tragedy, are nearly the same with those mentioned in history. Alfred, for almost two years, had wandered through England, concealing himself under feigned names and characters. He lived in the midst of his enemies, by being supposed to be dead. Emerging from this obscurity, he appears in the tragedy, and is informed of the alarming, ambiguous situation of Ethelswida; his usual stratagems present themselves, one would think, naturally to his mind, extremely agitated, and prone, both by temper and habit, to the most daring and romantic enterprizes. He resolves to enter the Danish camp, to learn the fate of Ethelswida, and observe the strength and order of the enemy's army, before he ventures a decisive engagement.

The continued artifice is inevitable. The conduct of Alfred, in the camp of Hinguar; the man-

ner in which he deceives the Dane, is extremely similar to the conduct of Orestes in the *Electra* of Sophocles, which no critic hitherto has blamed. Orestes enters the palace of Ægisthus, as the messenger of his own death, carrying an urn, which contains, he says, the ashes of Orestes, whose untimely fate he most circumstantially relates. The Grecian hero practises the deceit with an intention to kill the persons whom he deceives. The English hero deceives Hinguar only to gain access to Ethelswida, without meaning to hurt the person of his enemy. To praise Sophocles, and blame the author of *Alfred*, for the same conduct, seems a direct contradiction, which can only be accounted for in one way; an imaginary idea has been formed of the character of Alfred, as an old, mortified, ascetic sage, of spirit too sublime and ætherial to descend to human passions or human actions. But the real, as well as the dramatic Alfred, was a young hero, a bard, a winner of battles, brave and magnanimous, but compelled by the pressure of those desperate times, in which he lived, to practise a thousand arts, to exist by simulation and dissimulation. Whoever recollects and weighs these circumstances, will, it is presumed, readily pardon the artifice of Al-

fred, in the tragedy, and acknowledge that the *feigned* incidents of the piece are altogether consistent with the true. If not, the author must be contented to labour under the imputation of an erroneous judgment, for he meant nothing less than to degrade the character of Alfred; on the contrary, finding, in the records of a remote and barbarous age, a hero of great renown, but from the defect of his historians, involved in clouds and darkness,

Qui caput inter nubila condit,

he was tempted to seize his name, and display his character in new situations, connected with the old and well known events of his life and fortune. The play is printed as it was performed. An alteration has been made, in *one* scene, and sent to the theatre, which, if the tragedy should be resumed or revived, may perhaps contribute to heighten its effect.

PROLOGUE.

To furnish a new prologue for each play,
To dress the self-same dish a different way,
Exhausts the poet's art. And every year
Palates grow nicer, rarities more dear.
The cabinet, who in the green-room sit,
The secret junto of the realm of wit,
In these hard times, resolved their stock to spare,
And crib the prologue from the bill of fare.
Alfred on English ground alone may stand,
The darling hero of his native land:
No, no, our poet cried—this is no time,
Nor is it prudent now to save your rhyme;
Fired with my subject I have rashly dared,
And you in prologue should protect your bard;
When my adventurous muse, indulged before,
Now vent'ring further, needs indulgence more;
She dares to trace the workings of a mind,
The greatest and the best of human kind;
Adjust its movements to dramatic plan,
And blend the god-like hero with the man.
The greater Alfred's fame, our bard risks more;
Such weight the flying courser never bore.
Alfred! whose life such strange events adorn,
That history beholds romance with scorn;
Him to present, here in his native land,
Where still his genius, and his laws command,

Is an attempt like his, who rashly tried
The burning chariot of the sun to guide!
Yet this attempt from admiration rose,
Nor should he find in Alfred's kingdom, foes;
He, who by temper led, not love of fame,
Is the fond echo of your hero's name.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ALFRED, *King of England.*
EDWIN, *Earl of Devonshire.*
Earl of SURREY.
HINGUAR, *King of the Danes.*
ROLLO, *a Danish Chief.*

Officers, English and Danish.

ETHELSWIDA, *betrothed to* ALFRED.
RONEX, *Consort of* HINGUAR.
EDDA, ELLIS, } *Attendants on* ETHELSWIDA.

ALFRED.

ACT I.

SCENE,—*A Camp.*

Earl of DEVONSHIRE *and Officer.*

Off. The name of Surrey and the shield he bore,
With ease deceived the unsuspecting soldier:
I knew the port of Alfred.

Devon. So he thought;
And, ere he laid his weary limbs to rest,
Gave me, in charge, to warn thee to be silent.

Off. My Lord of Devonshire, on me depend.
Steel shall not tear the secret from my breast,
Astonish'd as I am at such a secret.
Who can unfold the cause? Why, at this hour,
When, big with England's fate, each moment rolls,
Does Alfred hide himself in clouds and darkness,

And spread uncertain rumours of his state,
Confounding all belief?

Devon. He spread them not;
From his uncertain fate those rumours rose,
E'er since that time, when the perfidious Dane
Attack'd the English, in the hour of peace,
On Alfred's wedding day.

Off. It was believed,
That Alfred, in the general carnage, fell
At Cyppenham; that in the swelling flood
Of wintry Avon, Ethelswida perish'd.

Devon. Such was the first report.

Off. Fain would I hear
Th' eventful tale of much-enduring Alfred,
And what is yet of Ethelswida known.

Devon. When faithless Hinguar with his host advanced,
The king, distracted for his lovely bride,
Sent off a hundred knights, by Surrey led,
To guard the Princess to a place of safety;
Then, furious, faced the Dane. With odds opprest,
Around their king his faithful nobles fell.
Alfred, by favour of the night, escaped,
And wander'd long, obscure, from place to place,
Through woods and forests, like some beast of prey,

By cruel hunters chaced. Much he endured;
And much his people suffer'd. English virtue,
Like England's oak, grew firmer from the storm.
Often the peasant his last morsel brought
To the dark wood or cave, where Alfred lay;
If questioned by the Dane, denied the deed;
And died, undaunted, to preserve his Prince.

Off. The story thrills my blood; by heaven and earth—
Where did he rest at last?

Devon. He never rested;
Even when he had a place of refuge found:
Where the deep winding streams, Parret and Thone,
Their waters mix, a little island lies,
With alders overgrown. No name it had,
Though now the name of Athelney it bears.
Marshes and pools, by inundation form'd,
Perplex the dire approach. There Alfred fix'd
His dreary habitation. Two brave knights
At first were all his train. Day after day
The numbers grew; and many a gallant knight
Found out the wild asylum of his lord.
From thence, with inroads fierce, they gall'd the Dane.

Dark as the spirits of the night they came,
And vanish'd at the dawn. In that retreat,
The sun, through every sign, o'er Alfred roll'd.

Off. Did Ethelswida there rejoin her lord?

Devon. Nor she herself, nor any of her train,
Have e'er been heard of since she left her lord.

Off. For certain, then, she lives. If she had perish'd,
Her fate would have been known.

Devon. The Danes ascribed
To me the inroads made by daring Alfred;
And both the Danish princes took the field.
Hinguar, with fire and sword laid waste the land.
Hubba, his host to Kenwith Castle led,
And, with strong siege, begirt my ancient towers.
Then Alfred issued from his lonely isle,
Conceal'd, as now, beneath another name.

Off. Did Alfred fight in Kenwith's bloody field?

Devon. He fix'd the fortune of that doubtful day,
When Hubba with his life the Reafen lost,
The enchanted standard, on whose magic wings
Conquest, till then, had flown. The battle won,
Alfred, impatient, bent his rapid course
To Westmoreland; where, as he fondly hoped,

His Ethelswida dwelt. He found her not;
And, late, last night, in deep despair, return'd.
Off. I see the clouded track, through which he pass'd
Invisible. Now he has reach'd the point,
And will break forth in splendour. We shall fight
To-morrow or to-day.
Devon. On these steep hills,
By nature and by art impregnable,
Which far and wide command Wiltonia's vale,
In absence of the King, my camp I pitch'd.
Audacious Hinguar occupies the plain,
And braves us to descend.
Off. Proclaim the King,
The King of England, at his people's head,
Then roll their rising valour on the foe.
Devon. Thy zeal becomes thee. He will chuse his time.
Meanwhile, the story of his death believed,
Lessens the weight and burden of the war;
Prevents the junction of the Danish chiefs,
And makes our foes secure. Soldier, farewell!
The King expects me: In my tent he rests.
Off. My bosom throbs to see him rise in arms.
[*Exit.*

Manet DEVONSHIRE.

Spirits in heaven may there attain perfection;
But weakness in this world is nature's stamp,
With which she marks the sons of men her own.
Who can compare with this accomplish'd prince,
In valour or in virtue? He excells
The counsellor, the sage, in civil wisdom;
The light of ancient times shines in his soul;
And the bards listen to his voice divine:
But vain his virtue, and his wisdom vain,
Against affection's power; too much he loved,
And mourns too much his Ethelswida lost.
He comes, with grief oppress'd.

Enter ALFRED.

Health to the King!
Has balmy sleep descended on his cares?
Alf. My sleep is haunted with my waking thoughts;
The vision of the night is Ethelswida.
Sometimes, a broken scene of other woes
My troubled fancy to her image joins,
And adds the monarch's to the lover's grief.
This very night, in dreams, I thought myself

Under the friendly roof, where once I lay,
Beset, on every side, with Danish spears;
When, to preserve my life, a noble youth,
The only offspring of a widow'd dame,
Unknown to me, my personage assumed,
And stopp'd the hounds, that bay'd for Alfred's blood.

Devon. O gen'rous youth!

Alf. Full in the gate he stood;
And brandishing his sword, aloud proclaim'd,
That England's King alive should ne'er be taken.
Headlong the foes rush'd on. Numbers he slew:
At last, unshrinking, in his place he fell;
And still the Danes believe that youth was Alfred.

Devon. No wonder that they should!—

Alf. This very night,
Pale in his wounds, the gallant form appear'd,
Whilst o'er the bleeding body of her son,
Majestic in her grief, his mother hung.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. [*To* DEVONSHIRE.] A warrior from the Danish camp, demands
Admittance to thy presence.

Alf. Let him enter. [*Exit Messenger.*

[ALFRED *walks aside.*

Enter a Warrior, with his beaver down.

Devon. Stranger, unfold thy purpose.

[*He takes off his helmet.*

Surrey, by heaven,
In Danish armour! [*Alfred, turning, sees him.*

Alf. Ha!

Sur. My royal master!

Alf. Surrey! that strange array, thy aspect sad,
Denounce thy tidings.—Ethelswida——

Sur. Lives.

Alf. She lives!—Why, like the messenger of death,
Dost thou before me stand? Some dreadful thing
Thou smother'st in that pause. I charge thee speak.
What has befall'n my love?

Sur. Captivity—

Alf. Is Ethelswida captive!

Sur. Yes, my lord.

Alf. To whom?

Sur. To Hinguar.

Alf. To my mortal foe!
Is she in Hinguar's power? Is brutal Hinguar
The master of her fate?
Sur. Would that I durst
This painful truth deny!
Alf. O wretched Alfred!
Destined to suffer misery and shame,
That princes seldom feel! All other ills,
Although in troops they came, I have endured.
Manhood and patience yield to this.—O Surrey!
Had I been Surrey, and hadst thou been Alfred,
I ne'er had brought such tidings to my friend!
Sur. Great is the grief, that renders thee unjust.
Hear me, O king! and if thou blamest me then,
Ill-fated Surrey shall offend no more.
Alf. What has my passion spoke? Thy pallid
cheek,
Thy hollow eye, those inauspicious arms,
Are signals of distress!
Sur. The story hear,
Of Ethelswida's fortune; how it chanced,
That Surrey lives to tell it.
Alf. O, my friend!
Forget my words. With destiny at odds,

And with myself, impatience glanced at thee,
The martyr of my cause.

Sur. That fatal night,
When, with my precious charge, I left my lord,
Through many dangers happily we pass'd;
But when we reach'd fair Eden's distant vale,
We found no refuge there.

Alf. Too well I know,
The Scots had razed Pendragon's lofty tower:
Then, whither didst thou fly?

Sur. There I dismiss'd
Most of my faithful knights. A few I kept,
Of chosen men the choice.—Eastward we steer'd,
Towards the wilds, beyond the source of Tyne.
By midnight marches, in untrodden paths,
That wind o'er mountains vast, through vallies deep,
We reach'd a lonely mansion, in a dale,
Which at the foot of snow-clad Cheviot lies.
There Ethelswida found a safe retreat;
And in those desarts wild she might have dwelt,
Unheard of and unknown.

Alf. Why did she not?

Sur. The rumour of thy death a tempest raised,

Which, from that harbour, drove her out to sea.
On me she laid her absolute commands,
To guide and guard her, as I could, to Kenwith:
My friends I warn'd to meet us on our way,
And on we went, till, one unhappy time,
The Danes surprised us in a narrow vale.
Against their fierce attack, our little band
Around the Princess form'd a fence of steel.
More and more narrow still the circle grew,
Till I alone was left with Ethelswida.
Alone I fought, till at her feet I fell.
Her dismal shrieks, her piercing cries I heard;
More grievous far, than all the wounds I bore.

Alf. Methinks I hear her cries! She call'd on Alfred;
Did she not, Surrey? Providence divine!
Why was not Alfred near?

Sur. As I have heard,
From some who in the troops of Hinguar fought,
For he it was who led the hostile band,
She swoon'd with grief and terror on the spot.
The Dane to her unwonted pity shew'd,
And raised her from the ground.

Alf. Tell me the truth;
Do not deceive me, Surrey.

Sur. O, my lord,
I never did, nor will I now deceive thee!
But of the Princess this I only know,
That in the Danish camp she still remains,
Guarded with care, her name and rank unknown.
Alf. What should I think! Can she submit to live—
To live, her honour lost? How didst thou 'scape
From such a slaughter? And how camest thou hither,
Commission'd by the Dane?
Sur. When night came on,
Some English peasants, who had seen the fight,
Crept from their huts, in secret, to the field,
With pious purpose to inter the dead.
In me alone, some sparks of life they found.
Their care preserved me. When my strength return'd,
To Hinguar's camp I went, gave out myself
Of Danish race, although in England born.
My service was accepted. I have found
Favour in Hinguar's sight, and in the band
That guards his person serve. From them I learn'd,

That Ethelswida, near his tent, is lodged
A mournful captive.

Alf. Near his tent! O heaven!
How have I merited?

Devon. Raise not thine eyes,
Nor lift thy hands to heaven: Far other looks,
Far other actions, heaven of thee requires.
Thou art a king, a soldier, and a lover;
Fight for thy crown, thy country, and thy bride.
Go forth this instant, animate thy troops,
And lead them to revenge their wrongs and thine.

[ALFRED *muses.*

Why does my royal master hang his head,
And bend on earth his eyes?

Alf. Forbear, my lord.—
[*To* SURREY.] What is thine errand to the camp of England?

Sur: To offer battle. But the true intent
Of Hinguar, is to learn if Alfred lives;
For various rumours have perplex'd the Dane.

Alf. He shall be satisfied. I see a ray,
Which through the darkness breaks. It grows more bright.
My friend, the tumult of my thoughts forgive.—
Surrey! [*Goes aside with* SURREY.

Manet DEVONSHIRE.

What does he meditate? I know
His mind with dreadful images is fill'd,
In Hinguar's arms he sees his ravish'd bride:
Ravish'd or not, she's captive to his foe.
Enslaved by force, 'tis force must set her free.
He cannot treat with Hinguar; that he knows,
By sad experience; for the woes of Alfred,
And all the evils of this hapless land,
Arose from England's confidence in Denmark.
No ties, divine or human, bind the Danes.
Of all the impious race, by far the worst,
And most profane, is Hinguar.

Alf. [*To* SURREY.] Go, prepare
For my reception.

Sur. Ah, may heaven avert
Those ills, which my prophetic soul forebodes!

[*Exit* SURREY.

Devon. I heard the parting words of faithful Surrey,
Which mark too well the colour of thy purpose.

Alf. Thy approbation I did not expect.
None can approve, but those who feel like me.
The Danish camp, disguised, I will explore,

Clad in the vesture of a British bard,
And learn, for certain, Ethelswida's fate,
Whatever has befall'n my hapless bride;
Assured of that, my heart shall shake no more.

Devon. Something like this my anxious soul foretold.

Alf. I read thy thoughts, but urge me not to hear
Thy friendly counsels, which I cannot follow.
In great events, the agitated mind
Consults its genius only. Low or high,
The active spirits in that level flow,
Nor fall nor rise, to act another's counsel.
That potent counsellor directs me now;
I feel the impulse, oft in perils felt.
Nor is my arm confined to Ethelswida;
The strength and honour of the Danish host,
How, and what quarter, I may best attack,
Attentive I'll observe.

Devon. Since thou hast fix'd
Thy resolution, to contend is vain;
The part of friendship now is to consult,
How we may guard thee best.

Alf. By the moon's light,
As, with a swift career, their camp I pass'd,

A wood, extended on the right I saw,
(Their left the village Ethendune defends,)
Canst thou inform, if they have open'd paths,
Or planted watches there?

Devon. Neither, my lord.
Presumptuous Hinguar holds such caution vain.

Alf. When dusky eve descends, in the dark time,
Between the fall of night, and the moon's rise,
In silence, thither march a thousand men,
Chosen with care, the bravest of our host;
There let them watch till morn; if no alarm
Comes ere the dawn, at dawn they may retire.

Devon. To chuse and lead that band shall be my care.
My warriors are the hunters of the hill;
Accustom'd to the woods, fearless they move,
By the pale glimpses of the clouded moon.
To them the changeful aspects of the night,
Whose false presentments armies oft confound,
In all their forms are known.

Alf. I would not wish
A better leader, nor a braver band.

Devon. The word?

Alf. St George.

Devon. O, may he guard the King!
And, as the minds of yonder heathen host
In darkness lie, so may their eyes be dark
And blind to Alfred!

Alf. As they still have been.
This is no new, though seeming bold attempt.
I have essay'd it, for a slighter cause;
When in the Isle of Athelney I lay,
The quarters of the Dane I oft explored,
In this disguise, and mark'd destruction's line.
Farewell, thy wisdom no direction needs;
Nor shall I long be absent from my friend.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE,—*The Danish Camp.*

Enter SURREY.

Sur. The tale of Orpheus, (which in Rome I heard,)
Whose lyre harmonious civilized mankind,
Is verified to-day. The stubborn sons
Of Denmark sympathize with Alfred's strain:
And, as he leads the song, their passions flow.
Hinguar himself is wonder-struck.

Enter an Officer.

Off. Begone;
Thou tread'st already on forbidden ground.
Sur. Inform the King, that Erick is return'd.
Off. Hinguar approaches, and with him the Bard,
Whose lyre is framed, by necromantic art;
Enchanted are the strings.—Away, with speed.
[*Exit* SURREY.

Enter HINGUAR *and* ALFRED, *in conversation.*

Hing. [*To the Officer.*] Withdraw.—
[*Exit Officer.*

Now I believe the death of Alfred.
This ring, the well-known signet of his power,
He never trusted to another hand.

Alf. When, in the rocky cave, I found him dead,
I then resolved, King of the warlike Danes,
To bear to thee the tidings of his death;
And as a proof, which could not be deny'd,
That ring I took, which erst mine eyes beheld
Upon his finger placed, with rites and charms,
When he was crown'd, in London, England's King.

Hing. I will reward thee to thy utmost wish.
Thou art no Saxon, but of British race,
And lovest the mountains of thy native land;
Chuse where they fairest rise; they shall be thine,
With all their valleys and their sylvan streams.
The gods I serve have sent thee to my aid.
'Tis my belief thou can'st assist me much,
In what is dearer to my soul than empire.

Alf. How can the bard assist a prince like thee?

Hing. In high respect I hold thy art divine.

Whate'er thou art, magician, bard, or seer,
Or if thou art all these, I crave thine aid.
Amidst my victories, I am most wretched;
By love tormented, unsuccessful love.

Alf. Thy love, with equal love, is not return'd?

Hing. More grievous still. The fair, my soul desires,
Cannot distinguish nor reward my love.
If thou her cruel malady can'st charm,
And drive wild frenzy from her troubled mind,
Task, to fulfil thy wish, the power of Hinguar.

Alf. In me behold the man of thy desire.
Unlawful arts I neither use nor know;
But am in nature's secrets deeply skill'd.
Far from the pleasures and the cares of men,
By strange misfortune to the desart driven,
A lonely anchoret, for years, I lived.
To me are known the virtues of each plant,
That grows in hill or dale, in sun or shade;
How one, by sympathy, with madness taints;
And how another clears th' infected blood.
Much I can help, or harm.

Hing. Exert thy skill;
And plant and herb, or song and spell employ.
Do what thou wilt'st, so thou restorest the fair.

Alf. Did her dire frenzy from distress arise?
From sudden perturbation of the mind?
Or is the cause unknown?

Hing. From grief, from fear,
From terror to excess, her frenzy rose,
Dreadful the shock she suffer'd!

Alf. How, my lord?
What did she suffer?

Hing. In her person, nothing;
But agony of mind, to an excess,
Not easy to describe.

Alf. Has she reveal'd
Her name, her family?

Hing. By different names
She calls herself; and when with questions urged,
She makes extravagant, fantastic answers,
And seems unconscious of her true condition.

Alf. Her general temper; is it sad or gay?
For frenzy is most various.

Hing. So is her's;
For she exhibits every various mood,
That frenzy e'er assumed. But thou shalt see
And judge her strange demeanour. In yon tent,
With purple bright, she dwells; and to this spot,

Where now we stand, she frequently repairs.
This is her usual hour. Behold! she comes.

Enter ETHELSWIDA, *with two Women attending, fantastically drest.*

Alf. How beautiful she is! O piteous sight!
Her frenzy's high.

Hing. Did e'er thine aged eyes
Behold her equal?

[ETHELSWIDA *passes them, and advances to the front.*]

Eth. Eagles of the rock,
Lend me your sounding wings; cherubs of heaven,
Who soar above the sun, your pinions lend,
To bear me to my love.

Hing. [*to* ALFRED.] Observe!

Alf. I do.

Eth. *The crested swans were heard to sing*
A sad lamenting strain;
As, floating with the stream, his corse
Descended to the main.

Hing. Still of a lover lost. I never heard
Her roving words tend to one point so long.

Alf. Sorrow and rage excessive, both are madness.

Time always cures them, if the frame is sound.—
She speaks again.

Eth. My heart swells in my breast,
And stops my breath. Oceans of tears I shed,
And shake the high pavilion with my sighs;
But neither sighs nor tears give me relief.
[*To* HINGUAR.] Thou keeper of the keys of death
and hell,
Unlock the iron gate, and set me free,
Then I shall smile and thank thee.

Hing. Queen of beauty!
I am thy captive, and obey thy will.
To sooth the grief that preys upon thy heart,
My care has hither brought a bard divine,
Whose voice can charm the ache and agony,
Which spirits feel. He's gentle, mild, and wise,
And shall attend thy call.

Eth. I will not call him.
His garb is vile; I hate it.

Alf. Hate not him,
Whose heart is tuned to sympathize with thine.
I shun the house of mirth, and love to dwell
A constant inmate of the house of sorrow.

[*While he speaks,* ETHELSWIDA *gazes and knows him.*

Eth. Then thou art not so wise, as would appear,
From thy white head, and grave habiliments.
[*Walks aside in great emotion. Returns.*
If thou art fond and weak, and foolish too,
Why, so am I. We may consort together,
And build strong castles.

Alf. Yes.

Eth. Thy harp shall move
The trees and rocks. In order they shall rise,
As high as Babel's tower.

Alf. Forthwith they shall.

Eth. Are all thy songs of melancholy strain?

Alf. The greater part.

Eth. Then thou hast lost thy love;
Else thou could'st ne'er have felt true melancholy.
I will not hear thee now. I'm poor in spirit,
And have not force to bear a strong affection.
I choose a garland song, a lighter strain.

There liv'd a youth by silver Thames,
Who loved the maidens fair;
But loose, at large, the rover ranged,
Nor felt a lover's care.

We must not with one censure level all.
Some men are true of heart, but very few.
Those live not long; they die before their time.
'Tis pity of them. Oh! [*Walks aside.*

Hing. A shower of tears,
Fast falling, calms the tempest of her mind.

Alf. 'Tis a deep-rooted malady.

Enter a DANISH *Officer.*

Off. My lord,
A troop of English horsemen from the hill
Descend into the plain. Our warriors wait,
Impatient, thy commands.

Hing. I come. [*Exit Officer.*
(*To* ALFRED.) Remain
Till I return.—Edda, Elisa, mark me.
Give her full scope; in nothing cross her mood,
That this reflecting sage, complete, may see
The picture of her mind. [*Exit.*

Eth. (*After a pause, approaches* ALFRED.)
Thou pilgrim sad,
Whose head the hand of time hath silver'd o'er,
Comest thou from Palestine?

Alf. From Rome I come.

Eth. From Rome! Thou dost not wear thy triple crown;
And yet I know thou art the holy Sire,
The common father of the Christian world.
Compassion shew to me. With wicked men,
With heathens and idolaters, I dwell,
Without the benefit of holy church;
Nor shrift, nor absolution have I known,
For seven long years.

Alf. I will, myself, confess thee.
The peace of heaven shall on thy soul descend.—
(*To the attendants.*) A course most fortunate her fancy steers;
Most likely to effect the King's desire.
In this conceit, to me she may reveal
Her name, her parentage, perhaps the grief
That rankles in her breast. Please to retire,
As if it were confession.

Eli. Haste away,
For fickle is her mind.

Edda. (*Going*) I like it not.
This may be stratagem: They're Saxons all.
'Tis fit they be observed. I'll keep in sight.

[*Exeunt.*

Manent ALFRED *and* ETHELSWIDA.

Eth. Alfred!——

Alf. Ethelswida! [*Offers to embrace her.*

Eth. O, beware!

Death lurks in every corner. Why expose
Thy noble life to such inglorious peril?
Not thus did I expect to see the King.
If e'er mine eyes beheld my lord again,
I hoped to see him in the light of steel,
Prompt to defend himself, or rescue me.
Why comest thou thus?

Alf. I come to know thy fate;
For, since I heard thou wast in Hinguar's power,
Distraction here has reign'd.

Eth. I comprehend thee.
Could Alfred think I would survive my honour?

Alf. I knew not what to think: But much I fear'd.

Eth. Dismiss that fear; and be of this assured,
I shall be as I am, or shall be nothing.
Fly from this place of peril; fly, with speed.
Thy presence to us both is sure perdition.
My own distress, with fortitude, I bore:
But feel my weakness, when the danger's thine.

The part I act, I hardly can sustain.
Did'st thou not mark, when first I heard thy voice,
How real passion mingled with the feign'd?
When I beheld thee risen from the grave,
And braving death again for Ethelswida,
The veil of frenzy scarce conceal'd my transport.

Alf. I saw thy struggling soul; then—not till then,
Athwart the cloud the beam of reason shone.

Eth. Tarry not here; else I shall lose my reason,
And be the thing I seem.

Alf. Till night shall spread
Her favouring mantle o'er my secret steps,
I cannot leave this place; and then I hope
To bear thee with me, through the host of Denmark.
Of that we shall have time to speak hereafter.
This garb secures me frequent, free access.
Now, let me warn thee, should it be suspected,
That I am not the person I pretend,
Thy ready answer must, with mine, accord.
I am thy brother; Surrey is my name,
And Emma thine.

Eth. Alas! Ill-omen'd name!
In my defence, the noble Surrey fell.

Alf. He lives to serve thee in the camp of Hinguar.

Eth. What miracle! mine eyes beheld him slain.

Alf. They come, they come; resume thy wild demeanour.

[ETHELSWIDA *walks aside as formerly.*

Enter ELISA *and* EDDA.

Eli. The King draws near.

Eth. Array me for his presence.
I'll have a crown to deck my pensive brows;
It shall be made of sun-beams, and of stars,
Caught as they shoot; and when the rainbow rests
Its glowing shaft upon the mountain's side,
I'll dip my robe in gold. Away, away.

[*Exeunt* ETHELSWIDA, EDDA, *and* ELISA.

Enter HINGUAR.

Hing. It was a false alarm. The English horse,
When we advanced against them, wheel'd and fled.
What judgment hast thou form'd? Did she say aught
In her confession?

Alf. She flew off at once
From that conceit. Her mind's a burning fire,

Where sudden thoughts like wreaths of smoke arise,
And, parting from the flame, disperse in air.
Her shatter'd fancy, like a mirror broken,
Reflects no single image just and true,
But many false ones.

Hing. Dost thou hope to cure
The malady, which thou describ'st so well?

Alf. There is more ground of hope than cause of fear.

Hing. Forthwith the wonders of thine art essay;
Meanwhile, within the circle of my tents
Secure remain. Gotherd's imperious daughter,
(Whom in an evil hour, when new in England,
To please the Danes I was induced to wed,)
Is in the camp arrived. I guess her purpose,
And will prevent her speed.

[*A voice behind the scenes.*]

Presumptuous slave!

[*Another voice.*]

Thou can'st not pass.

[*First voice.*]

Who shall oppose the Queen?

Enter RONEX.

Ron. I come too late; she's gone. Hail to the King!

Who is this minion, that usurps my place,
And, with mock majesty, dishonours Denmark?

Hing. Outrageous as thou art, respect at least
The stranger's ear.
[*To* ALFRED.] Retire, and shun the storm.

[*Exit* ALFRED.

Ron. What pageantry is this?

Hing. Why hast thou left,
Without permission of thy lord, the place
Appointed for thee?

Ron. Ha! Am I thy slave,
That thou presumest to treat me with such scorn?
Hast thou forgot my birth? Dost thou not know
I am the heir of Denmark and of England—
That in my right thou reign'st?

Hing. To Denmark go;
There o'er thy barren rocks and deserts reign:
But fair and fertile England is my own.
The sword, that won, shall keep the pleasant land,
I conquer'd for myself.

Ron. Talk'st thou of conquest,
Thou woman's warrior, who consumest thy days
In secret, lawless, and inglorious love,
Whilst o'er thy head thy slaughter'd brother's ghost
For vengeance shrieks in vain!

Hing. None of my foes,
Of whom the fellest far I reckon thee,
Shall long elude my vengeance. From this hour
I cast thee off; for ever I renounce thee;
And soon thou shalt behold another Queen
Exalted in thy place.

Ron. Fulfill thy threat,
And thou shalt soon behold another King.
The leaders and the soldiers of thy host
Revere in me the Scandinavian line.
When I am not thy Queen, thou reign'st no more.

Hing. This instant leave me, or by Denmark's gods,
By Loda's altar, stain'd with human blood,
To Iceland's dreary isle thou shalt be borne,
There to repent thy folly.—Guards!

Enter an Officer with Soldiers.

Ron. Stand off!—
Tyrant, when next we meet!—

Hing. Force her away.
Never let Gotherd's daughter enter here.

[*Exeunt* RONEX *and Guards.*

Small is her boasted influence with my people;
And yet her jealous rage is fell and bloody;

My fair Norwegian felt her mortal hate.
I must not trust my lovely captive's life,
To the slight keeping of that officer,
Who yielded to the threats of haughty Ronex.
This instant I'll dismiss him, and appoint
The brave and faithful Erick to his place.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE, &c.—*As before.*

HINGUAR *and* EDDA.

Edda. Early my doubts arose. I ne'er believed
Her malady was real. Often, my lord,
Have I observed her looks sedate and calm;
Then, quick as thought, when she had caught my
-eye,
She started into well-dissembled frenzy.
Hing. Why ne'er unfold thy doubts?
Edda. Till now I durst not,
Because I had no proof of my suspicion:
For in thy presence, with amazing art,
She counterfeits distraction. Well I knew
Thy partial love would ill receive a charge
On mere conjecture founded. What I saw
This day to certainty has changed my doubts.
Try her, my lord; and if I have deceived thee,
I ask no mercy.

Hing. If she has deceived me,
As I believe she has, I'll shew her none.
This is the lover whom her songs bewail,
The favourite, for whom she guards her charms,
And mocks the credulous Dane. He mocks me too.
I'll take luxurious vengeance!—Guards.

Enter ERICK *with a plume and scarf, with Danish Soldiers.*

Erick. My lord.

Hing. Unsheath your swords. Be ready, at a word,
To execute my orders. [*To* ERICK.]—Send him hither.— [*Exit* EDDA.
Surprised, subdued, with dread of instant death,
I'll search his secret soul; and then the slave,
For his presumption, dies.

Enter ALFRED, *views the scene for a moment, and then advances intrepidly.*

Hing. Thou traitor! villain!
How durst thou, with thy puny arts, attempt
To practise upon me?

Alf. Take back those names;
Which, utter'd here, do not dishonour me,
But on thyself return.

Hing. Ha! Dost thou brave me?
I'll pull thy courage down.

Alf. Thou canst not, Hinguar.
I mock the lifted sword, and smile at death.

Hing. Tell me, impostor, who thou really art,
And who that woman is, thy false associate
In this vile artifice?

Alf. Not from the dread
Of what thy vengeance can inflict, I answer;
But to assert my honour. To thy tents,
Although disguised I came, no traitor I.
I came not, Hinguar, to attempt thy life;
But to inquire a much loved sister's fate;
For whom I trembled, since the hour I heard
She was thy captive.

Hing. Ha! thy sister, sayst thou?
What is thy name?

Alf. Surrey.

Hing. Thy name is known,
Of great account, amongst the foes of Denmark.
Thou art the chosen friend of English Alfred.

Alf. His faithful subject.

Hing. What's thy sister's name?

Alf. Emma. Alas! to great misfortune born!

Hing. Suspend a while thy judgment of her fortune.—

Retire.— [*To the Guards, who go off.*

The tale of Alfred was devised
To smooth thy way to Emma?

Alf. So it was,
Yet Alfred, if alive, in peril lives;
And, doubtful, at this moment, is his fate.

Hing. Dead or alive, I care not. If he lives,
He never can regain his kingdom lost;
Nor England e'er shake off the yoke of Denmark.
Surrey, though war and battle are my joy,
Yet I desire sometimes in peace to dwell.
Thy sister's beauty has inflamed my heart,
And policy accords with love's desire.
The charming Emma shall be Hinguar's bride;
And, England, partial to her own, obey
Princes, whose blood is native to the land.

Alf. Thou hast a queen.

Hing. What then? The gods of Denmark
Do not, like yours, their votaries confine
To the domestic bondage of one wife.
My soul abhors the daughter of old Gothred,

That furious woman, who was once my queen:
Her I divorce; and on her vacant throne,
Will place thy sister.

Alf. That her faith forbids.
A Christian cannot wed a heathen lord.

Hing. Thy mind, averse, is fertile in objections.
Saxon, thou speak'st not with a brother's tongue.
Thou hast deceived me once.——Erick!

Enter ERICK.

Erick. My lord.

Hing. Within my tent confine and guard him strictly. [*Exeunt* ALFRED *and* ERICK.
I do suspect this is the lover still.
It much behoves me soon to be resolved.
'Tis just, with fallacy, to prove the false,
And turn the arts of woman on herself.
I'll give a rude alarm, and shake her soul,
Even to the centre.—To my wish, she comes,
Buried in thought. She has not yet observed me.
[*Steps aside.*

Enter ETHELSWIDA.

Eth. I fear we are discover'd and betray'd.
That Danish woman, whom I never loved,

Has held a private conference with Hinguar;
She pierces me with her malicious eyes,
Swimming in joy, and conscious of detection.
She has o'erheard us.—

[HINGUAR *comes behind and seizes her arm.*

Ah!

Hing. Why dost thou start,
And look so guilty? Where's thy frenzy now?
The artful semblance that deceived the Dane?
Thy fear betrays the fraud I knew before.
Confess thy fault, and trust to Hinguar's mercy.

Eth. Mercy!

Hing. Although thou hast offended deeply,
Thy beauty pleads for thee. My love forgives.
One victim is enough.

Eth. One victim! ah!

Hing. Yes, thy associate, the pretended bard,
Who call'd himself thy brother. He hath paid
The forfeit, with his life.

Eth. [*Staggers, ready to faint.*] Thou bloody Dane!
Inhuman monster! hast thou murder'd Alfred,
And dost thou speak of love to Ethelswida?

Hing. Alfred and Ethelswida!

Eth. Tyrant! Yes.
There's nothing now to save or to deny.
In me, behold the bride of royal Alfred!
Thy treachery, and not thy valour, Dane,
Upon our nuptial day, divorced our loves.
But neither force nor fraud can part us now.
Where Alfred is, my soul shall shortly be.

Hing. Thou art greatly changed. This courage is not real.
'Tis not thy nature.

Eth. I shall change no more.
My former fear from love extreme arose.
Then, life was dear to me, for Alfred's sake.
But now, since he is dead, for Alfred's sake
I wish to die, and loath the life I loved.

Hing. 'Tis bravely spoken.

Eth. 'Tis not my desire
To hold discourse with thee. Go, from my sight;
Thou'rt hideous to my eyes, thou vile assassin!
[*Turns away.*

Hing. Hear me!

Eth. I would not, if I could prevent it.
But what I can I will. I speak no more.
My lips are closed for ever.

Hing. Yet I know
A way to open them. That bitter smile
I reck not; no, nor those averted eyes.
Know, I have turn'd thy arts against thyself,
And caught thee in thy own deceitful snare.
From impotence of mind, thou hast reveal'd
The important secret, that the bard was Alfred.
Now, if he dies, it is thy folly kills him:
He lives, by thee discover'd to his foe.

Eth. Does Alfred live, and has my tongue betray'd him?
Have I discover'd Alfred to his foe?—
Barbarian!

Hing. Still thou may'st preserve his life,
His fate on thee depends.

Eth. On me!

Hing. On thee.
Accept my offer'd hand, and Alfred lives;
Nay, re-ascends, in peace, his father's throne.
If not, I swear by Odin, awful name,
The God of battles whom alone I serve,
This hour my rival dies.

Eth. Is this thy mercy?
Would Hinguar, conscious that my heart is full
Of love to Alfred, take a faithless hand?

Hing. I would; I will this instant; speak the word.

Eth. I shudder at the thought, and loath thee more,
Much more than ever. Brutal is thy passion,
And horrible to womankind thy love.

Hing. Is this thy answer? Whilst the Saxon lives
Thou hast some hope. Of him I will dispose,
Without delay. [*Going.*

Eth. Stay, I conjure thee, stay!

Hing. My time is precious. I have deeply sworn,
And fix'd the only ransom of his life.

Eth. Touch not the life of Alfred.

Hing. Every word
Thy passion speaks accelerates his doom.
I go to see him die.

Eth. [*Seizing his robe.*] Thou shalt not go.
By all that's holy, I will not survive him!

Hing. Some of thy sex, I know, have sworn as much,
And have survived the vow. [*Going.*

Eth. One moment stay!

Hing. Her countenance is like a troubled sky,
When the wind veers about.
Eth. [*Aside.*] Inspire me, heaven!
The life of Alfred, and the fate of England,
Are in the balance. Yes, I am inspired.
Heaven, that suggests the thought, will give me strength
To act the generous deed.
Hing. Her mind gives way.
Eth. Hinguar! should I consent to be thy bride;
Would Alfred's life be safe? What pledge for that?
What hostage hast thou worth the King of England?
Hing. Consider and demand.
Eth. Set Alfred free:
The English camp is near; conduct him thither:
Let me have full assurance of his safety;
Then lead me to the altar. When my vow
Is made, though made to thee, our holy faith
Enjoins, till death, observance. [*Exit.*

Manet HINGUAR.

Set him free,
And trust a woman's word!—I like it not.

Fortune hath favour'd me beyond my hopes.
My rival, both in empire and in love,
Is in my power. How shall I best improve
The prosperous hour, which my good planet rules?

Enter ERICK.

Erick. My lord, the valiant Rollo craves admittance.

Hing. I will not see him. He is sent by Ronex,
With some ungrateful message. Ask his business.

Erick. Unask'd he told it. In the field, to-day,
His brother press'd too near the English horse:
They turn'd and took him pris'ner. Rollo begs
That he may be exchanged.

Hing. For whom?

Erick. For Surrey,
Whom in the tent he saw.

Hing. He and his brother,
And all their tribe, are not worth such a ransom.
Erick, that Surrey is the King of England,—
Alfred himself.

Erick. Alfred!

Hing. He is, by heaven!
And my fair captive is the Mercian maid,

By Alfred loved, the beauteous Ethelswida!
Go, bring the Saxon hither. [*Exit* ERICK.

Manet HINGUAR.

Now, I'll sound him.
The policy of state enjoins his death:
The politics of love suspend his doom.
The instrument he is, by which I'll work
This woman to my will. If I can make
Her lover false to her, pride and revenge
Will bring her not reluctant to my arms.
Thus play the passions of her wayward sex.
Birds of a kind they build their nests alike;
And one true falcon like another flies.
So, every woman, when her love is scorn'd,
By certain instinct, takes the same revenge.—

Enter ALFRED, *in his first dress; advances resolutely.*

Twice have we met to-day, and both the times,
With borrow'd names and forms, thou hast deceived me.
Alfred! I know thee now.

Alf. Hinguar, thou dost.

Hing. Repine not at this chance. If we had met

In lists of combat or embattled field,
Death or captivity had been thy portion.

Alf. Uncertain ever is the fate of arms.

Hing. I have not found it so. In every battle,
On my victorious banners fortune waits.
Suppose, then, that thou wert, by chance of war,
My pris'ner; say, what wouldst thou now expect
Should be thy doom?

Alf. 'Tis Hinguar's part to say,
And mine to suffer.

Hing. Thou shalt suffer nothing
Unworthy of a king. Though of the race
Of war and battle, who have stretch'd the spear
Of conquest o'er mankind, yet I will speak
The words of peace. The English and the Danes
Have fought too long for this contested land,
Whose spacious kingdoms can, with ease, contain
The rival nations; and the fertile fields
Glut, with luxurious plenty, their desires.
Let us divide the land, and join in league
Eternal. Then, united, shake the world.

Alf. Treaties of peace and leagues have oft been made;
But how observed, thou know'st.

Hing. There was no bond

To make the former treaties fast and sure.
The peace I offer now shall be confirm'd
By ties which bind the nations to each other.
My valiant brother left an only child,
In Denmark born, but here in England bred.
Matchless in form and feature is the maid;
Straight as the pine that grows on Norway's hills.
She rises tall above the virgin-train:
Blue rolls her melting eye. Her heaving breast
Is whiter than the snow that's newly fall'n.
This maid of beauty I will give to Alfred,
The pledge and bond of union and of peace.

[ALFRED *remains silent.*

Why dost thou not reply? Dost thou disdain
A bride of Danish race?

Alf. Silent I stand,
To learn the full extent of thy design.
Mean'st thou not still to blend the nations more;
To mix the royal blood of either land;
And wed thyself a wife of English race?

Hing. I do.

Alf. And 'tis my bride that thou hast chosen?

Hing. Call her not thine. Nothing belongs to thee.
A captive has no right.

Alf. Thou keep'st thy word,
And treat'st me like a king!
Hing. I'll make thee one,
Which now thou art not. Wed the maid of Denmark,
And o'er thy father's ancient kingdom reign.
Alf. Unworthy I should be to reign,—to live,
If I could make such barter of my honour.
Is this the peace of Hinguar?
Hing. Yes; no other.
Alf. Are these the terms that thou propound'st to Alfred?
Hing. They are.
Alf. I am a captive and unarm'd;
So, with impunity, thou may'st insult me.
Hing. I stand astonish'd at thy pride, thy folly.
Thou ruin'd Alfred! think of thy condition.
Thy life or death upon my nod depends.
Alf. Ruin'd I am; but it was human weakness,
And no disgraceful fault, that ruin'd Alfred.
Impell'd by tender, anxious, jealous love,
Despising danger, to thy tents I came;
And dost thou think I am so quickly alter'd?
Dost thou imagine, that the dread of death
Can move my soul to yield to thee my bride,

And lead, if she would follow me, to shame?
Hinguar, the meanest man of Saxon race,
In freedom born, would from such baseness shrink,
And scorn with infamy to purchase life.

Hing. Thou talk'st it well; and I have often heard
Of the persuasive eloquence of Alfred.
Plain are *my* words. They speak thy certain doom.
If not the friend and firm ally of Hinguar,
Thou diest.

Alf. My death will not conclude the war.
One course there is, if greatly thou aspirest
To reign supreme in England, and possess,
With honour gain'd, fair Ethelswida's charms.

Hing. I do.

Alf. Then mark me, Dane! Though thou art sprung
From heroes more than human,—Odin's race,
Who stretch'd the spear of conquest o'er the world;
And thou thyself, in war and battles bred,
Chain'd to thy sword submissive fortune lead'st;
Alfred, whose fathers have in battle fall'n,
Whose valour ne'er could fix inconstant fortune,
Offers to meet thee in the listed field;
And, by his single arm, to thine opposed,

Decide the sovereignty of England's realm,
By the award of heaven. In this encounter,
My nobles and my people will abide;
And, if thou conquer'st, Ethelswida's thine.

Hing. What folly to presume, thou fallen Alfred!
That I will free my captive, and contend
With him on equal terms!

Alf. Braved as I was,
I thought it fitting, thus to meet thy scorn.
Perhaps I entertain'd a glimpse of hope,
That thou might'st chuse thus nobly to prevail,
To gain by valour warlike England's crown;
And to the beauteous Ethelswida come,
The victor, not the murderer, of her husband.

Hing. The beauteous Ethelswida has consented
To give her hand. The terms which thou disdain'st,
Vain-glorious Saxon! are more ample far,
Than those which she did stipulate for thee.
Thus she rewards the constancy of Alfred.
Consider that.

Alf. No, not one moment, Dane.
Thy faith in love and war to me are known.

Hing. I will take no advantage of thy passion.

Hear my determined purpose: Thou shalt die,
Or wed the maid of Denmark. Heated now,
And chafed with keen contention, pride rebels
Against thy reason. I will give thee time
To cool, and take the counsel of thy judgment.
One hour thou hast to think.—
[*To* ERICK.] Conduct him hence.

Alf. Prudence requires that Hinguar too should think.
Behold yon banners streaming to the wind!
The host of England will revenge their King.

[*Exeunt* ALFRED *and* ERICK.

Hing. This Alfred bears a high and haughty mind,
Not likely to submit. Over his grave
The path of Hinguar lies. When he is dead,
After a storm of rage, a flood of tears,
The changeful sky of woman will grow clear,
And beauty's beams on the new lover shine.

Enter EDDA.

Edda. The tidings which I bring, my pardon plead
For this intrusion.

Hing. Say what has befall'n?

Edda. Ronex, the Queen, pursues the captive's life.
Rollo, devoted to her will, address'd me,
With promises of infinite reward,
If I would lend my aid. When I refused,
He threaten'd me. The party of the Queen
Was strong enough, he said, by force to right her.
Hing. That was his errand here?
Edda. I seem'd to slight
His menaces. He kindled into rage;
Swore that the bravest chiefs of Denmark's host
Were in his tent assembled with the Queen,
And waited his return, to rise in arms,
And execute her orders.
Hing. I'll prevent them,
And crush this nest of traitors.—Rollo's tent,
That is the place?
Edda. It is.
Hing. Look to thy charge.
Here thou art absolute; the guards obey thee.
[*Exit.*

Manet EDDA.

This lovely captive will at last be Queen.
I must endeavour to regain her favour. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE, &c. *as before.*

ALFRED *and* ERICK.

Erick. For England's and for Ethelswida's sake,
To gain a little time, appear to yield.
Ere this, the valiant Edwin is inform'd
Of thy disaster. Night approaches fast,
And Danish discord aids the English arms.
Shew not thy soul so open to the Dane.

Alf. My friend, to whom my favour has been fatal,
It is thy fortune to behold the last.
And darkest scene of Alfred's tragic life.
Something it grieves me, that mankind, who judge
By the event, perhaps may blame my rashness.
Do thou defend the ashes of thy friend,
And publish to the world—

Enter EDDA, *who speaks to* ERICK.

Edda. Erick, the Captive
Desires once more to see the Saxon Prince.
For thy permission to the King I'll answer.

Erick. 'Tis not my part to question, but obey.—
[*Exit* EDDA.
What can this woman mean?

Alf. Surrey, I tremble,
And, like a coward, shake from head to foot.
My mind for this encounter is not arm'd;
Stern was my preparation, firm the mail
That bound my breast against approaching death;
This trial takes me on another quarter,—
The woes of Ethelswida!—Rise, my soul,
Against the storm. I ought to strengthen her,
And stand myself a rock.

Enter ETHELSWIDA *and* EDDA.

Edda. [*To* ERICK.] Retire with me;
Let their discourse be, as she wishes, private.
[*Exeunt* ERICK *and* EDDA.

[ETHELSWIDA *comes towards* ALFRED *with great emotion.*

Alf. O Ethelswida, do not pierce my heart
With looks so full of pity and of love!
Eth. My soul looks through my eyes, my love, my lord,
My king, my husband!
Alf. Oh! thou fann'st the fire,
On which my reason ashes heaps, in vain.
Like Hercules, I wear the poison'd robe:
Thou pull'st the garment, and my nerves are torn.
Why didst thou wish to see the ruin'd Alfred?
Eth. Not ruin'd yet. His love endanger'd Alfred:
My love shall save him still.
Alf. Can there be truth
In Hinguar? Now my soul begins to fear.
Eth. What dost thou fear?
Alf. The weakness of thy sex.
Eth. The weakness of my sex?—I guess thy thoughts.
What did the tyrant say of Ethelswida?
Alf. What I despised, discredited, and scorn'd.
He said, that he had sought and won thy love:
That thou consented'st to become his bride.
Eth. On what conditions?

Alf. Then thou didst consent!
Hear, men and angels, hear!

Eth. Angels and men,
And Alfred, hear and judge! To save thy life,
To stop the bloody tyrant's lifted arm,
I did consent, on this express condition,
That Hinguar instantly should set thee free.
When certain of thy safety, Alfred, then
I was prepared and arm'd to mock the Dane——
To die.

Alf. Forgive me, noblest of thy sex,
Greater than fancied heroine of the song,
Forgive the wrong I offer'd to thy virtue.

Eth. Accept thy freedom; let my hand restore
The King of England to his injured people,
Robb'd of their hero by my luckless love.
And when the time shall come, as come it will,
Unless the planet of this hour should strike,
That Alfred his predicted fate fulfils,
And in the circle of his empire sits,
With glory crown'd, remember Ethelswida,
Who died, exulting, to preserve her lord.

Alf. Remember thee! This is no time to speak,
To ope the flood-gates of my bursting heart.
Remember thee! Whatever be my fate,

Thou ne'er shalt be forgot, while Albion lifts
Her head above the waves. But know, my love,
That this barbarian never was sincere;
For other terms to me he has proposed,—
A Danish bride.

Eth. To thee a Danish bride!

Alf. Or instant death to follow the refusal.

Eth. Alfred, thou livest!—

Alf. I live till he returns;
For though I scorn'd his offer, he persisted,
Gave me one hour more calmly to consider.
The time's expired.

Eth. Thou must not, shalt not die.
Rather—

Alf. Rash is the counsel of affection.
I know the character of Hinguar well:
Nor life nor liberty will he bestow
On those whom he has wrong'd. If I should wed
The Danish maid, I but embrace dishonour,
And perish with addition of disgrace.

Eth. What means the crafty Dane?

Alf. I think he meant
To circumvent the soul of Ethelswida.
Should I consent to wed a Danish bride,

He hopes to rouse the woman in thy heart,
And profit by the rage of slighted beauty.

Eth. Perhaps the women of his savage land
Have taught him thus to judge of womankind.
If they are like the clouds, that change their form,
And careless fly before each shifting gale,
Far different is the soul of Ethelswida.
Alfred, thy love is dearer than my life;
Dearer than both is Alfred's life or fame.
In this extreme distress remove me far,
Exclude me from thy thoughts, suppose me dead,
And act as if I never had been born.

Alf. Thy magnanimity gives edge to mine.
Rather than wed the Danish maid, I die:
Yet, to elude the deadly rage of Hinguar,
And wait the chances of the coming night,
Big with event——

Enter ERICK.

Erick. My lord, a num'rous band,
Led by the Queen and the fierce Bothnic chief,
Surrounds the tents.

Alf. Give me a sword.

Erick. Take this.

If through their squadrons I can win my way,
At midnight I return. [*Exit.*

Alf. One moment past,
On whose uncertain wing perdition floats;
The next may bring salvation. O, my love!
Ere Ronex comes, retire; shun the first shock
Of her impetuous rage.

Eth. Here I remain,
And live or die with thee. To fly from her,
Were to confess myself the wretch she thinks me.
I'll meet her as I ought. Wrong'd by her hate,
And by her husband's love, my innocence
I will not plead, but urge my injuries,
And crave of her redress.

RONEX, *entering with Danish Soldiers.*

Ron. Spare those that yield:
Kill all that dare resist. [*Seeing* ETHELSWIDA.
See where she stands,
Like an enchantress in the magic circle.—
Advance and seize her.

Alf. [*Drawing his sword.*] Hold! he dies that stirs
Till I have spoken.—Hear, mistaken Queen!
And learn from me how wide thy anger errs.

Ron. Ha! who art thou, that bears so brave a form?
Yet in this place, to shame devoted, dwell'st
The pander and the guard of Hinguar's love.
What is thy name?

Alf. My name!

Ron. Fear'st thou to tell?

Alf. It will amaze thee much: My name is Alfred.

Ron. The King of England!

Alf. Yes.

Ron. Thou look'st a King,
Yet most incredible thou should'st be Alfred.

Eth. Not more incredible, than that the person,
Whose life thy rash resentment now pursues,
Is Alfred's bride, the Princess Ethelswida.
Born of a race dishonour never stain'd,
And to the strictest rules of virtue bred,
My soul, O Queen, devoted to my lord,
But one affection knows, and worse than death
Abhors the love of Hinguar! Thy protection
My sex demands, and my misfortunes claim.
Embrace this fair occasion to be just,
And generously repair the cruel wrong
Thy thoughts have offer'd to my spotless fame.

Ron. The Princess Ethelswida!—Do I dream?
Or does each waking sense assure a scene
Of things and persons, more incredible
Than ever vision of the night combined?

Enter ROLLO.

Rol. Odin be praised! I come in time to save them.—
Hearken, my liege, to faithful Rollo's voice,—
This is the King of England.

Ron. I believe it.
Before thou camest, he had himself reveal'd;
His royal presence warrants what he is.—
Princess, the hatred and the fell intent
With which, confessedly, at first I came,
Do not relate to thee, unlike in all
To the imagined object of my wrath.
My error pardon; and my deeds shall shew
The pity which I feel for thy misfortunes,
The high esteem in which I hold thy virtue.

Eth. Thy pity for distress, thy love of virtue,
Nobly thy deeds may prove. Deliver Alfred,
The victim of his love and of his virtue.
Long is the tale, too long to tell it now,
But Hinguar's voice has doom'd my lord to death,

Because to him he would not yield his bride.
If, then, the cause of that decree offend thee,
Treat with the King of England, and prevent it.

Rol. By Thor's right arm, the lady counsels well.
Renounce all thoughts of amity with Hinguar,
Who never will forgive thy friends or thee
The insult of this day. Unite with England,
And give the nations peace.

Ron. Thy daring soul
Soars to the highest pitch of bold emprize.
But will the Danish chiefs adopt thy counsel?

Rol. Make trial; prove their hearts; if they should faint,
Ruin abides them. They have gone too far,
With safety to recede. If he who draws
His sword against a king, away should throw
The useless scabbard, what ought *he* to do
Who draws his sword against a fell usurper,
Who dares not shew the mercy of a Prince?

Ron. That argument comes near. I'll urge it home;
And, when we have consulted and resolved,
The King of England then—

Alf. To their demands

Will cordially agree. A common cause,
In time of danger, leads to sure accord.

[*Exeunt* RONEX *and* ROLLO.

Manent ALFRED *and* ETHELSWIDA.

Alf. My love, look up; and, with a face of joy,
Welcome the dawn of hope.

Eth. Used to despair,
Like one in darkness long immured, as yet
I relish not the light.

Alf. Soon shalt thou see,
The rock of danger prove the rock of refuge,
And from the foe we dreaded safety come.

Eth. Still I suspect the faith of Danish friends;
But, most of all, my soul distrusts the Queen,
That furious woman, who puts off the sex,
And, in her rage, against her husband arms.

Alf. Let us of what she is avail ourselves;
And, o'er the bridge she builds, the torrent cross,
Which roars unfordable.

Eth. Before she came,
Of the approaching night, big with event,
Thou wast about to speak. Fain would I hear
Of aught that's good, and not derived from Ronex.

Alf. This hour,—for now the shades of night descend,—
A chosen band, by valiant Edwin led,
Draw near the Danish camp; and, in the wood,
My orders wait. If noble Surrey lives,
Deeds will be done to-night.

Eth. And Hinguar too,
He will not slumber.—See, the Dane returns!

Enter ROLLO.

Rollo. The Queen of Denmark, and the chiefs in council,
Thy presence wait, to fix their last resolve.

Alf. Whate'er on me depends, they may command. [*Exeunt* ALFRED *and* ROLLO.

Manet ETHELSWIDA.

Is the defect peculiar to myself?
Or is it incident to womankind,
By sudden strong impressions to be sway'd?
The image of this dreadful Ronex haunts me,
And, like a ghost, excites inhuman fears.
When I was toss'd upon a sea of peril,
In which my foot could reach no ground of hope,

I swam with courage on the stormy waves;
In shallower water now, fearful I wade,
And reel at every surge. She gazed on Alfred;
Avow'd her admiration of his form——

Enter EDDA.

Edda. Lady, I bring alarming news.

Eth. To whom?

Edda. To thee. When thou hast heard my tidings, judge.

Among the Danish captains, one there is,
To me by blood and friendship strictly join'd:
He told me, that the chiefs at last agreed
To join with England, upon this condition,
That English Alfred weds the Danish Queen.

Eth. I saw it in her eyes; foretold my fate.—
Should he refuse, what then?

Edda. In that event,
They mean to treat with Hinguar, and restore
To him his captives; but their hope is high,
That Alfred will consent.

Eth. Not whilst I live.—
But will the Danes permit a woman's life
To stand a wall between them and their purpose?

The rage of Ronex, like a swelling wave,
Over that slender mound will burst amain:
Woman to woman is the fellest foe.

Edda. And such a woman! Search from end to end
The world, all nations and religions try,
There is not to be found a parallel
To this unprincipled, unbridled Ronex;
The passion of the moment is the god
She always serves.

Eth. Alas! what shall I do,
Who in the level of her fury stand?

Edda. Ronex, thy deadly foe, is also mine.
Ere now, beneath her hatred I had fall'n,
But for my powerful friend.

Eth. Thy friend!—Is he
High in command?

Edda. To Bethnic Rollo next.
Many and brave the warriors he commands:
Behind thy tent, the passage to the plain
This night he guards.

Eth. My hopes revive again.
Should I escape, or if perchance I perish,
No more my destiny entangles Alfred.

For me the eagle left his airy way,
And, stooping in my track, his freedom lost.—
Edda, if pity of my lost estate
Can move a woman's heart, or vast reward
Induce thy soul to do an act humane,
Persuade thy friend.

Edda. To what?

Eth. To let me pass.

Edda. Then, whither wilt thou go?

Eth. If I can gain
The shelter of the neighbouring wood, I'm safe;
But any place I hold more safe than this.
Wilt thou assist me?

Edda. I embrace thy fate.
Through the dark night, and through surrounding arms,
I shall attend thee hence, if I can win
My friend to guide our steps. Forthwith, I'll try.
Please to thy tent repair.

Eth. I wrong'd thee once,
And thou at last hast proved thyself my friend.
With perfect trust, my soul on thee relies.
May angels prompt thy tongue! [*Exit.*

Manet EDDA.

No art of mine;
The dread of Ronex, working on her mind,
Conjured each spectre up I wish'd to raise.
I'll guide her steps committed to my care,
And lead her safe to Hinguar's longing arms.

[*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE,—*The Tents.—At a distance Mountains and Trees; the Moon in Crescent, and the Stage darkened.*

Enter ETHELSWIDA.

Eth. Had she not fail'd, ere this she had return'd.
Unbraced by vain suspense and expectation,
My spirit flags, and, like a racer tired,
Swerves in the course. I am not what I was.—
Hark to that hollow sound! Is it the hum
Of voices roll'd together in the wind?
Or roars the blast of autumn through the woods?
Alas! I was not wont to fear the night,
When, wand'ring on the pleasant banks of Trent
By moon-light, oft I traced the glittering stream,
And mused on Alfred. Peaceful were the sounds,
And to my temper tuned, which then I heard.

My steps, light as they were, amongst the leaves,
From her high roost the fluttering stock-dove scared,
Or startled from his lair the bounding stag.
Begirt with armies now, hemm'd round with spears,
I fear at every step to rouse a foe.—
Through the dim shades behold a human form.
'Tis Edda.—Ah! what tidings?

Enter EDDA.

Edda. Good—and bad.

Eth. Of Alfred, what?

Edda. Enraged at his refusal
To wed their willing Queen, the Danish chiefs
His sword demanded, and to Rollo gave
Charge of his person. Still they sit in council,
New courses to devise.

Eth. Would I were hence,
Before those dreadful counsellors determine!—
What says thy friend?

Edd. He answers for thy safety,
If firm thy purpose be, this night to fly.

Eth. Blest be thy tongue!

Edda. What else remains to say
Or do, the cover of the tent will hide.

Eth. Yet, ere I plunge into the stream of fate,
[*Kneels.*
Angels and saints, who once yourselves were human,
Now perfect spirits, and, with seraphs mix'd,
Administer to heaven's eternal King,
O hear my suppliant voice! and to the throne
Where sovereign mercy sits, prefer the prayer
Of one in deep distress, who, in the hour
Of her prosperity, never forgot
To bow before your shrines! Gracious, descend!
Through darkness, night, and death, my footsteps guide!
But, if I'm doom'd in the rough path to fall,
O, guard the King of England from the rage
Of cruel foes—preserve the life of Alfred!
[*Exeunt to the tent.*

Enter ROLLO, *with two Danish Soldiers.*

Rollo. It is the Queen's command.

1 *Sol.* The warrant's good.
The Queen commands our swords.

2 *Sol.* Yes, to kill men,
Arm'd and resisting; that's a soldier's task.
To kill a helpless woman likes me not.

Rollo. If you demur!—

[*First Soldier speaks aside to the second; then turns to* ROLLO.

1 *Sol.* My lord, we are resolved.

Rollo. I know you resolute and secret both;
Selected you as worthy of reward,
Befitting such a service.

1 *Sol.* We'll perform it.

Rollo. The deed, when done, must never be avow'd;
But to the chance of this unruly night
Solely imputed.

1 *Sol.* Silent is the grave!—
Whoever sees us dies.

2 *Sol.* Look there, my lord,

[ETHELSWIDA *and* EDDA *in the back ground.*
Who may they be, who yonder steal along,
Timid their step and mien?

Rollo. Forthwith pursue.
She in the azure mantle is the Princess;
Of her make sure. [*Exeunt the Danes.*

Manet ROLLO.

Not without much regret
Did I consent to Ethelswida's death.

My soul was loth to hurt the lovely maid;
Loth to put out the radiant star of beauty,
Ere half her course was run. Necessity
Imposed this deed on my reluctant mind;
For, though the star was bright, she beam'd destruction,
And, like a comet, from her tresses shook
Discord and war.

Enter RONEX.

Ron. Are my commands obey'd?

Rollo. Just as my soldiers were about to enter
And execute their orders, from the tent,
With silent steps, she stole: they saw, pursued,
And have ere now o'ertaken.

Ron. Speed their swords!—
My fortune, now, is on the anvil placed,
For fate to strike, and fashion good or evil.
Hinguar comes on, dark as the night that shades him.

Rollo. He shall be met.

Enter Messenger.

Mess. Hail, sovereignty of Denmark!
A foe, whom we expected not, draws near;
The host of England——

Rollo. Ha!

Mess. Cover the plain.
Along their line I heard the voice of Erick;
That traitor leads them on.

Rollo. Caught in a net
Spread by the hand of chance!—

Ron. What shall we do?
What refuge now, in counsel or in arms?

Rollo. The King of England is our only refuge.
Make him thy friend, and he will quickly turn
On Hinguar's troops the torrent of his arms.

Ron. No choice is left.—Fly and bring Alfred hither. [*To the Officer.*

Rollo. In pledge of amity, restore his sword.

Manent ROLLO *and* RONEX.

Ron. Rollo, thou look'st as if thou didst repent
What we have done. My soul's a constant stream,
Which knows no changeful ebb.

Rollo. If Alfred should
Desire to see that Ethelswida's safe—

Ron. I'll find an answer fit.—He comes! Behold him.
O'er his fix'd eye his frowning brows project;
His mind is high wound up.

Enter ALFRED.

Rollo. Now, King of England,
Let no resentment of the past provoke
Thy soul to judge with passion of the present.
Hinguar, thy mortal foe, comes on, resolved
His lovely prize by valour to regain.
Opposed to him we stand, equal in arms,
But from their hill the English host descend,
To turn the scale of combat. Dost thou wish
The tyrant to prevail?

Alf. Answer direct
Thy question needs not. Hinguar is my foe.
Grant me those equal terms I ask'd at first,
And to your arms I join the force of England.

Ron. Thy terms are more agreeable to Ronex
Than those the policy of Denmark named.
By Frea, eldest goddess of the sky,
The ancient arbiter of human things,
I swear to the performance.

Alf. In that tent,
If Ethelswida rests, I wish to see her.

Ron. Far from this spot, where Hinguar points his march,

The Princess to a safer place is moved,
Near my pavilion.

Alf. Ha!

Enter Messenger.

Mess. A fierce attack
Is on the right begun.

Rollo. The troops of England!—
If Alfred gives his aid, it must be now.
This officer will on thy steps attend,
And to the Danish chiefs announce thy purpose.
That is the way direct. Along this path
I go to combat Hinguar. [*Exit* ROLLO.

Alf. Queen of Denmark,
To the afflicted captive comfort give:
She is the bond and cement of our friendship.
[*Exit* ALFRED.

Ron. Then we shall ne'er unite. He does suspect me.
He rivetted on mine his jealous eyes.
There is no proof, and I will brave suspicion
With loud appeals, with vows and protestations
Of purest innocence.—That shout is near;
It comes against the wind: My foes prevail.—
Nearer and nearer still!—'Tis time to fly.

On one side Alfred, on the other Hinguar,
Here let them meet, and fight for Ethelswida.

[*Exit.*

Hing. [*Behind the scenes.*] Pursue along the vale; the leaders kill,
But spare the common men.

Enter HINGUAR, *with Soldiers.*

Hing. This is the place.
Now I have reach'd the port of my desire;
The prize of love and conquest anchors here.
Where are the guards? where she whom they should guard?—
What does this awful solitude portend?

Enter, from the opposite side of the Stage, the two Assassins, with the robe of ETHELSWIDA *stained with blood.*

1 *Assass.* Twice have we changed our course. To keep this robe
We lose ourselves.

Hing. By Hela's sulphur'd fires,
The robe of Ethelswida stain'd with blood!
Infernal villains!—

2 *Assass.* Caught, undone,—the King!

1 *Assass.* [*Throwing down the mantle.*] We are but instruments to work the will
Of our superiors.

Hing. Have you kill'd the lady
Who own'd this garment?

1 *Assass.* To deny were vain.
The Queen commanded us, and we obey'd.

2 *Assass.* We know our fate, and we will die like men.

Hing. Long shall you live in pain, and wish for death.
The ragged saw shall tear your tortured limbs;
And when your carcases are all one wound,
Fasten'd on iron hooks you shall be hung,
And die by inches.—Bear them to their fate.

[*Exeunt, guarded.*

Enter Messenger.

Mess. My lord, the troops which on the left advanced,
Attack'd, and soon subdued the guards of Ronex;
But, charged by English Alfred, in their turn
Before him fly.

Hing. My trumpets, sound a charge,

And call the straggling soldiers to my spear.
The charm that drew me to this spot, will bring
The Saxon hither.—Odin, brace my arm,
And let my sword, like thine own thunder, fall
On Alfred's crest! [*The trumpets sound.*

Enter ALFRED, *with English Soldiers, and the Officer of the first Act.*

Alf. Behold the man——
Hing. Whose steel
Shall pierce thy heart.
Alf. Thy menaces, barbarian,
Though fierce and rude, become thee better now
Than when I heard them last.
Hing. I threaten'd then,
And now I will perform.
Alf. My soldiers brave,
Restrain your ardour.
[*To* HINGUAR.] Spare thy people, King!
Let us alone in mortal strife engage,
Whilst every Dane and Saxon shall look on,
And by the fortune of their prince abide.
Hing. 'Tis what I wish'd; but did not think thou durst
Come from the crowd, and, single, meet my arm.

Alf. In more than this mistaken: But, by deeds,
Not words, I will convince thee.

Hing. Prompt thy tongue,
But slow thy hand. Come on. Odin for Denmark! [*Draws.*

Alf. For England and her King, the living God!
[*They fight,* HINGUAR *falls.*
Now, where is Hinguar's pride?

Hing. Here in his heart,
Unconquer'd still, the pride of Hinguar dwells.
To die in battle is a warrior's death.
The hero fights and falls, but never yields.
Hinguar has fought. From sea to sea his sword
Through England blazed, a meteor dropping blood;
The wolf and eagle follow'd to the feast,
Tracking its course. The warrior, old in arms,
The youthful chief, by many a virgin loved,
Lay reeking in their gore.

Alf. As thou dost now.
The virgin's and the widow's curse have found thee,
And laid in dust the troubler of the land.

Hing. In dust thy hopes are laid. Behold that robe!
Belike thou know'st it.

Alf. Ethelswida's robe

With bloody gashes torn!—More fell than bears
That starve on hill of snow, how durst thou lift
Thy cursed hand?

Hing. No. Ethelswida fell
By Ronex; yet, although I kill'd her not,
Her death delights me. Saxon, I rejoice
At thy calamity. Happy my lot
Compared with thine. To the Valkyrian maids
I go, to Odin and the hall of joy.
Thou, of thy love bereft, shalt waste thy days
In lamentation, like the wretch who pines
By Hela's lake, and drinks the poison'd stream
Pour'd from the jaws of snakes. I laugh at thee,
And, like my fathers, die. [*Dies.*

Alf. His dying voice
Of me prophetic spake. O, Ethelswida!
And Surrey, too, in Alfred's cause has fall'n!
Now on the top, the summit of affliction,
Like a tree stript of bark and branch, I stand,
Bare on all sides, and naked to the storm. [*Falls.*

[*Voice behind the Scenes.*]

Where is the conquering King, my lord, my husband?
Make way, and let me rush—where is my Alfred?

ETHELSWIDA *enters and sees him.* EDWIN *following.*

Eth. Eternal powers! Is this the scene of joy?
[*After a pause, looking at the robe.*
I am the cause accurst of Alfred's death
And England's ruin. Bear me witness, heaven!—
But words are vain. Let those bewail their doom
Who live to suffer, and prolong their pain.
The gleam of hope, extinguish'd by despair,
Sharpens my sense of misery, and spreads
A deeper horror on my tortured mind.—
My sure, and now my only friend, come forth.
[*Draws a dagger.*
Spirit of Alfred, stay! [ALFRED *revives.*

Alf. The shades of death
Still swim before my eyes. I heard the ghost
Of Ethelswida call!

Eth. He lives, he lives!
My heart, surcharged, bursts with a flood of joy.

Alf. Her voice, her form; 'tis she, 'tis she herself!
My Ethelswida! [*Runs into her arms.*

Eth. Alfred! Gracious heaven,
For ever blest thy providence divine!

Alf. In error lost, upon the brink we stood.
Of bottomless perdition. O, my love,
Most certain seem'd thy death.
Eth. I saw thee dead,
And raised my arm to join my lot to thine.
Alf. I heard the dagger fall. It was reserved
For thee, thou pride and glory of thy sex,
To give the noblest proof of love—and live.
Eth. E'er since the sad commencement of our woes,
Deep on my heart engraved was the resolve,
Not to survive thee in the storms of fortune;
That anchor held like fate.
Alf. Whence came that sign,
Which friends and foes deceived?
Eth. True was the sign
Of death. The wearer of my garment died,
For me mistaken.
Alf. 'Twas a wounded mind
Which laid me low. Oppress'd with grief I sunk.
Edwin, my friend——
Devon. Complete is Edwin's joy,
To see his Prince with love and glory crown'd.
Alf. The scene is ghastly, and with death deform'd.

In place more fitting, of our friends and foes,
According to desert, we will decree.
The nations now are one; with Hinguar died
The enmity of England and of Denmark.
My people with their monarch shall be blest,
While such a partner of my empire reigns.

Eth. Nor shall the story of the toils of Alfred
Sink to oblivion in the tide of time,
Or to posterity descend in vain.
From hence the people of the land he loved,
And future princes of that land, may learn,
Fearless to stem the torrent of disaster,
And ne'er of England, or themselves, despair.

[*Exeunt.*

EPILOGUE.

BY MR GARRICK.

Our bards, of late, so tragic in their calling,
Have scarce preserved one heroine from falling:
Whether the dame be widow, maid, or wife,
She seldom from their hands escapes with life.
If this green cloth could speak, would it not tell,
Upon its well-worn nap how oft I fell?
To death, in various forms deliver'd up,
Steel kills me one night, and the next the cup.
The tragic process is as short as certain;
With this,*—or this,† I drop—then drops the curtain.
No saint can lead a better life than I,
For half is spent in studying how to die.
The learn'd dispute how tragedies should end;
O, happily, say some—Some death defend.
Mild critics wish good fortune to the good;
While others, hot-brain'd, roar for blood! blood! blood!—
The fair, though nervous, tragic to the soul,
Delights in daggers, and the poison'd bowl.
"I would not give a black-pin for a play,
Unless in tenderness I melt away:
From pangs and death no lovers would I save,
They should be wretched, and despair and rave,
And ne'er together lie—but in the grave!"

* She makes the motion of stabbing.
† And here of drinking poison.

The brave rough soldier a soft heart discovers,
He swears and weeps at once, when dead the lovers,
As down his cheeks runs trickling nature's tide,
"Damn it—I wish those young ones had not died!"
Though from his eyes the drop of pity falls,
He fights like Cæsar, when his country calls.
In spite of critic laws, our bard takes part,
And joins in concert with the soldier's heart.
O let your feelings with this party side,
For once forgive me that I have not died;
Too hard that fate, which kills a virgin bride!

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

REBELLION

IN THE YEAR 1745.

TO

THE KING.

SIR,

YOUR Majesty, at every crisis of a most eventful reign, has acted in such a manner, as to captivate the hearts of your people, who love a brave and steady Prince. It becomes not one whose praise may be thought partial, to celebrate the virtues of his Sovereign; for the first book I published was dedicated to your Majesty, then Prince of Wales; and when his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland presented my petition, for leave to dedicate this History

to your Majesty, the petition was granted, in terms that I shall be proud of as long as I live.

I am, with the most profound respect,

SIR,

YOUR MAJESTY'S

Most faithful subject,

And most obedient,

Humble servant,

JOHN HOME.

PREFACE.

HISTORY assumes various forms, and attains different degrees of excellence, from the importance of the subject, from those opportunities the Author has had to know the truth, and from the manner in which he relates the most interesting events of that period he hath chosen.

It is universally acknowledged, that the most complete instruction and entertainment are to be found in histories written by those illustrious persons, who have transmitted to posterity an account of the great actions which they themselves performed.

Small is the number of such historians; and at this day, Xenophon and Cæsar seem to stand unrivalled and alone. Instructed by them and other ancient authors, men of learning, in modern times, are made acquainted with the military art and civil policy of Greece and Rome. But in the year 1745, when the Highlanders took arms against govern-

ment, the condition and manners of the Highlanders at home, in time of peace, with their arms, array, and alacrity in making war, were unknown in England, and the Low-country of Scotland, to a degree almost incredible. One author, Wishart,* Bishop of Edinburgh, (who had been the Marquis of Montrose's chaplain, and an eye-witness of all his battles,) published a History of the Wars of Montrose, who gained so many victories, with a body of men consisting almost entirely of Highlanders: but very few people in the Low-country of Scotland had read the Bishop's History of Montrose; and when the rebel army was marching from the North to Edinburgh, though every body talked of nothing but the Highlanders, no mortal ever mentioned Wishart's name.

In the preface to a History of the Rebellion, it seems proper, for more than one reason, to take some farther notice of the Revolution, which is but slightly mentioned in the History itself.

That memorable event, which took place in England and Scotland at the same time, forms a new

* Soon after the Restoration, episcopacy was established in Scotland, and Wishart made Bishop of Edinburgh.

epoch in the constitution of both nations; for the great precedent of deposing one King, and soon after transferring the crown to another family, the nearest Protestant heir, but more remote than several Roman Catholic families, gave such an ascendant to popular principles, as puts the nature of the constitution beyond all controversy.

From the accession of James I. to the Revolution, (one short interval excepted,)* there had been a continued struggle between the King and the Parliament; during which, foreign affairs were either altogether neglected, or treated in such a manner as greatly lessened that weight which Britain ought to have in the scale of Europe. But the Revolution put a period to the hereditary succession of the Stuart line; and the settlement of the crown upon the Prince and Princess of Orange, was accompanied with a Declaration of Rights, where all the points disputed between the King and the Parliament were finally determined, and the powers of the royal prerogative were more narrowly circumscribed, and more accurately defined,

* The despotism of Cromwell, which was called the Commonwealth.

than they had been in any former period of the government.

To the Revolution it is owing, that the people of this island have ever since enjoyed the most perfect system of liberty that ever was known amongst mankind. To the Revolution it is owing, that at this moment, in the year 1801, Great Britain stands the bulwark of Europe; whilst her fleets and armies, in regions the most remote, defend the cause of Government and Order, against Anarchy and Confusion.

The greater part of this account of the Revolution is given in the very words of Mr Hume, in his History of England; for no words can express more perfectly the advantage of the Revolution settlement. The same author, in the last volume of his History, has given the speech which James II. made to the Privy Council, assembled at his brother's death; in which he professed his resolution to maintain the established government, both in church and state; saying, that he knew the laws of England were sufficient to make him as great a monarch as he wished to be, and he was determined not to depart from them; that as he had heretofore ventured his life in defence of this na-

tion, he would still go as far as any man in maintaining all its just rights and privileges.

This speech was received with great applause, not only by the council, but by the nation; and addresses full of loyalty and zeal came from every quarter of his dominions; so that the whole nation seemed disposed of themselves to resign their liberties, had not James, at the same time, made an attempt upon their religion; for, notwithstanding that regard which he professed for the established government in church and state, either he was not sincere in his professions, or he had entertained such a lofty idea of his prerogative, as left his subjects little or no right to liberty, but what was dependent on his will and pleasure. Besides this account, given by Mr Hume, of the behaviour of James at his accession, and of the disposition of his people at that time, there is a manuscript in Lord Lonsdale's possession, written by one of his ancestors, John Lord Lonsdale,* who says expressly, that when James succeeded his

* John Lord Lonsdale was first Lord of the Treasury in the reign of King William.

brother, Charles II., the current of public favour ran so strong for the Court, that if the King had desired only to make himself absolute, he would not have met with much opposition; but James took the bull by the horns, and without the least regard to the laws, endeavoured to introduce Popery, which his subjects abhorred.

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

REBELLION

IN THE YEAR 1745.

CHAPTER I.

The Subject.—Introduction.—Extent and Limits of the Highlands of Scotland.—Manners of the Highlanders.—Clanship.—The Highlanders inferior to the Lowlanders in Arms.—When and how they became superior.—Their Attachment to the Family of Stuart.—They take Arms at every Crisis of Public Affairs.—Measure suggested to reconcile them to Government.—Approved of by Sir Robert Walpole.—Recommended by him to the Cabinet Council.—Rejected by the Cabinet Council.—Britain declares War against Spain.

In the year one thousand seven hundred and forty-five, Charles Edward Stuart, the Pretender's eldest son, calling himself the Prince of Wales, landed with seven persons in a remote part of the Highlands of Scotland. A few days after his arrival, some Highlanders (not a very considerable

number) joined him, and descending from their mountains, undisciplined and ill armed, without cavalry, without artillery, without one place of strength in their possession, attempted to dethrone the king, and subvert the government of Britain. The conclusion of this enterprize was such as most people both at home and abroad expected; but the progress of the rebels was what nobody expected; for they defeated more than once the king's troops; they over-ran one of the united kingdoms, and marched so far into the other, that the capital trembled at their approach, and during the tide of fortune, which had its ebbs and flows, there were moments when nothing seemed impossible; and, to say the truth, it was not easy to forecast, or imagine, any thing more unlikely, than what had already happened.

More than half a century has elapsed since the battle of Culloden was fought, in which the rebel army was defeated and dispersed, never to make head, nor appear in force again; but no history has yet been published of a war in which the inhabitants of Britain were so much interested, that, as long as it lasted, they thought and spake of nothing else.

In those days, I carried arms, (though not a military man by profession,) and, serving with the king's troops, underwent part of their adverse fortune; for I was taken prisoner at the battle of Fal-

kirk, and, during my captivity, was an eye-witness of some memorable events, an account of which I committed to writing, whilst the facts were recent, and fresh in my memory; and have taken no small pains, for many years, to procure authentic information of what I did not see, visiting every place which was the scene of any remarkable occurrence, and examining the accounts which I had collected of each battle, upon the field where it was fought, accompanied and assisted by persons who had been present upon every occasion, and sometimes principally concerned.

Proceeding in this manner, I have finished a course of inquiry, which has enabled me to deduce, from its origin to its final extinction, the history of the rebellion.

That the story may be understood without the help of digressions, to explain and illustrate some circumstances concerning the Highlanders which are not generally known, I shall introduce the subject by describing the country of the Highlands, and the manners of the Highlanders, who, when Charles Stuart landed amongst them, were essentially different from the other inhabitants of Britain.

Scotland is divided into Highlands and Lowlands: these countries, whose inhabitants speak a different language, and wear a different garb, are not separated by friths or rivers, nor distinguished

by northern and southern latitude: the same shire, the same parish at this day, contains part of both; so that a Highlander and Lowlander (each of them standing at the door of the cottage where he was born) hear their neighbours speak a language which they do not understand.

That the extent and limits of the country called the Highlands, (at the time of which I write,) may be seen at one glance, a map of Scotland is prefixed to this volume, where a winding line from Dumbarton, upon the river Clyde, to Duninstra, upon the frith of Dornoch, separates the Highlands from the Lowlands.

This line, beginning at Dumbarton, goes on by Crieff and Dunkeld to Blairgowrie in Perthshire, from which it runs directly north to the forest of Morven, in the heights of Aberdeenshire: at Morven it proceeds still northwards to Carron in Banffshire; from Carron it takes its course due west, by Tarnoway, in the shire of Murray, to the town of Nairne (in the small shire of that name;) from Nairne, the line is continued by Inverness to Conton, a few miles to the west of Dingwall in Rossshire: at Conton, it turns again to the north-east, and goes on to Duninstra, upon the south side of the frith of Dornoch, where the line of separation ends; for the country to the north of the frith of Dornoch (that runs up between Ross-shire and Sutherland,) is altogether Highland, except a narrow

stripe of land between the hills and the German Ocean, which washes the east coast of Sutherland and Caithness. To the west of this line lie the Highlands and Islands, which make nearly one half of Scotland, but do not contain one eighth part of the inhabitants of that kingdom. The face of the country is wild, rugged, and desolate, as is well expressed by the epithets given to the mountains, which are called the grey, the red, the black, and the yellow mountains, from the colour of the stones of which in some places they seem to be wholly composed, or from the colour of the moss, which in other places covers them like a mantle.

In almost every strath, valley, glen, or bottom, glitters a stream or a lake; and numberless friths, or arms of the sea, indent themselves into the land.

There are also many tracts of no small extent, (which cannot properly be called either mountains or valleys,) where the soil is extremely poor and barren, producing short heath, or coarse sour grass, which grows among the stones that abound every where in this rough country. Nor is the climate more benign than the soil; for the Highlands in general lying to the west, the humid atmosphere of that side of the island, and the height of the hills in such a northern latitude, occasion excessive rains, with fierce and frequent storms, which render the Highlands for a great part of the year a disagreeable abode to any man, unless it be his native

country. In the Highlands there are no cities nor populous towns,* no trade or commerce, no manufactures but for home consumption, and very little agriculture. The only commodity of the country that fetches money is cattle; and the chief employment of the inhabitants is to take care of the herds of their black cattle, and to wander after them among the mountains.

From this account of the Highlands, it is manifest, that the common people, earning little, must have fared accordingly, and lived upon very little; but it is not easy to conceive how they really did live, and how they endured the want of *those things which* other people call the conveniences, and even the necessaries of life. Their houses, scattered in a glen or strath,† were usually built of sod or turf, sometimes of clay and stone, without lime. In such habitations, without household stuff or utensils wrought by an artificer, the common people lived

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* There are several royal boroughs in the Highlands, that make a part of the different districts, (each of which districts sends a representative to parliament.) Some of these boroughs lie near the line of separation, and are inhabited by a mixed race of people, Highlanders and Lowlanders. In the borough of Nairne, at the time of the rebellion, the inhabitants of one side of the town spake English, and their neighbours on the other side spake Gaelic.

† A glen is a narrow vale with a rivulet, and hills on each side. A strath is a valley with its hills, and a river.

during the winter,* lying upon boards, with heath or straw under them, and covered with their plaids and blankets. For a great part of the year, they subsisted chiefly upon whey, butter, cheese, and other preparations of milk, sometimes upon the blood† of the cattle, without much grain or animal food, except what of the latter they could procure by fishing or hunting, which, before the late rebellion, were free to people of all ranks, in a country where the rivers and lakes swarmed with fish, and the hills were covered with game. Making a virtue of necessity, the Highlanders valued themselves upon being able to live in this manner, and to endure cold and hunger to a degree almost incredible. In those days, the chieftains and gentlemen, who were, many of them, stock farmers and graziers, though

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* The winter town, as it was called, consisted of a number of such houses, and sometimes a better one belonging to a gentleman or farmer. In summer the Highlanders left the winter town with their cattle and servants, and went to the hills, (for to each of the winter towns belonged a considerable tract of land in the adjacent hills.) There they built temporary huts in the shealings, or best spots of pasture, removing from one shealing to another, when the grass failed. About the end of August they left the hill and returned to the winter town.

† The first thing the Highlanders did when they went to the hills, was to bleed all their black cattle; and, boiling the blood in kettles, with a great quantity of salt, as soon as the mass became cold and solid, they cut it in pieces, and laid it up for food.

much better accommodated than their inferiors, occasionally lived like the common people,* and contended with them in hardiness, maintaining that it was unworthy of a Highlander to stand in need even of oat-meal, to discharge the prime duty of a man, and fight for his chief.

In these words, which are their own,† the Highlanders expressed their opinion of themselves, and their enthusiasm for clanship. As that singular institution formed and stamped the peculiar character of the Highlanders, I shall endeavour to explain the principle of the domination of chiefs, which now exists no more.

The Highlands are divided into a number of territories or districts, separated by rivers, lakes, or mountains, sometimes by ideal and arbitrary boundaries. Each of these districts, called by the natives a country, was the residence of a clan or kindred, who paid implicit obedience to the Cean Cinne, or head of the kindred. This person (known in the English language by the name of Chief)

* The Highland gentlemen used to make hunting parties, and go to the hills in time of frost and snow, where they remained several days. They carried with them no provisions but bread and cheese, with some bottles of whisky, and slept upon the ground, wherever night overtook them, wrapped up in their plaids.

† The words of Sir Ewen Cameron, often quoted by his countrymen.

was the hereditary magistrate, judge, and general of the clan; he determined all disputes that arose amongst his people, and regulated their affairs at his discretion. From his judgment there was no appeal: to decline the tribunal of the chief, and apply to any of the king's courts for redress against one of the same kindred, was considered as highly criminal, a kind of treason against the constitution of clanship, and the majesty of the chief. The sirname of the chief was the name of the clan, and the title which he bore constantly reminded the Highlanders of the *kindly* origin of his power; for the Cean Cinne was the kinsman of his people, the source and fountain of their blood. His habitation was the place of general resort, the scene of martial and manly exercises; a number of the clan constantly attended him both at home and abroad; the sons of the most respectable persons of the name lived a great part of the year at his house, and were bred up with his children. To bind the kindred faster together, the cord of interest (in the most ordinary sense of the word) was drawn strait between them; the lands of the chief were let to his nearest relations upon very easy terms, and, by them, parcelled out to their friends and relations in the same manner. That consanguinity, the great principle of clanship, might not lose its force by being diffused amongst a multitude of

men, many of whom were far removed from the chief, there were intermediate persons called the chieftains, through whom the inferiors looked up to their chief. Every clan consisted of several tribes; and the head of each tribe was the representative of a family descended from that of the chief. His patronymic (which marked his descent) denominated the tribe of which he was chieftain, and his lands (for every chieftain had some estate in land) were let to his friends and relations in the same manner that the lands of the chief were let to his friends; each chieftain had a rank in the clan regiment according to his birth, and his tribe was his company. The chief was colonel, the eldest* cadet was lieutenant-colonel, and the next cadet was major. In this state of subordination, civil and military, every clan was settled upon their own territories, like a separate nation, subject to the authority of their chief alone. To his counsels, prowess, and fortune, to his auspices, they ascribed all their suc-

* In settling the rank of their officers, the same rule was not observed by every clan that took arms in the year 1745. In some regiments, the eldest cadet was lieutenant-colonel, and in others the youngest cadet. The Highlanders say, that, according to the original customs of clanship, the eldest cadet ought to be next in command to the chief, and that the appointment of the youngest cadet to be lieutenant-colonel, was an innovation introduced by those chiefs who had great land estates.

cess in war. The most sacred oath to a Highlander, was to swear by the hand of his chief. The constant exclamation, upon any sudden accident, was, May God be with the chief! or, May the chief be uppermost! Ready at all times to die for the head of the kindred, Highlanders have been known to interpose their bodies between the pointed musket and their chief,* and to receive the shot which was aimed at him.

In such communities, the king's peace and the law† of the land were not much regarded. Beyond the territories of each clan, the sword was arbiter of all disputes; several of the clans had inveterate quarrels, and deadly feuds; they went to war and fought battles. Rapine was often practised, under

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* Examples of this sort of enthusiasm are handed down by tradition, and preserved in the memoirs and manuscript histories of the Highland families. A low country man, not many years ago, expressing his admiration of one of those commoners who sacrificed himself to save the life of his chief, a Highland gentleman said he saw no reason to admire the action so much, that the man did his duty, and no more; for he was a villain and a coward, who, in the same circumstances, would not do the same.

† The chiefs sometimes went to law with one another, but the decisions of the Court of Session, and the judgments of the Privy Council, were not of much avail, unless the party who had obtained judgment in his favour was more powerful than his antagonist, or better supported by his neighbouring chiefs. Lochiel and Mackintosh were at law and at war for 360 years.

pretext of reprisal and revenge; and, in those parts of the low country that bordered upon the Highlands, depredation and rapine were often committed without any pretence at all: hence, fierceness of heart, prompt to attack or defend at all times and places, became the characteristic of the Highlanders. Proud of this prime quality, they always appeared like warriors; as if their arms had been limbs and members of their bodies, they were never seen without them; they travelled, they attended fairs and markets,* nay, they went to church with their broad-swords and dirks, and, in latter times, with their muskets and pistols. Before the introduction of fire-arms, the bow, the broad-sword and target, with the dirk, were the weapons offensive and defensive of the Highlanders. When the use of fire-arms became common in the kingdom, they assumed the musket instead of the bow, and, under the smoke of their fire, advanced to close with the enemy. As to their dress, or Highland garb (for so they call it at this day,) which, like every thing unusual in war, had an effect of terror in the last rebellion, it is needless now, when so many battalions of the king's troops wear it as their

* In those days, that is, about 170 years ago, a clergyman in the Isle of Skye went to church with a broad-sword at his side, and his servant walked behind him with his bow and quiver full of arrows.—*Letter from the Isle of Skye, Appendix, No. XXVII.*

uniform, to describe a dress which is to be seen every day in the streets of London and Edinburgh; but it seems necessary to mention, that the target was no part of a Highlander's accoutrements, except on the day of battle; and in those battles that were fought during the rebellion, most of the men in the front rank of every clan regiment, besides their other arms, had a pistol; though, in the present times, neither the 42d regiment, renowned for valour, nor any other Highland regiment, has any arms but the musket and bayonet.

Such were the arms and accoutrements of the Highlanders when they went to war. Order and regularity, acquired by discipline, they had little or none; but the spirit of clanship in some measure supplied the want of discipline, and brought them on together; for, when a clan advanced to charge an enemy, the head of the kindred, the chief, was in his place, and every officer at his post, supported by his nearest relations, and most immediate dependants. The private men were also marshalled according to consanguinity: the father, the son, and the brother, stood next each other. This order of nature was the sum of their tactic, the whole of their art of war.

Such was the state in which the Highlanders remained amongst their mountains for many centuries. Troublesome neighbours, no doubt, they were to the inhabitants of those parts of the low

country that lie nearest the Highlands; but not at all formidable enemies to the government of Scotland, as long as England and Scotland were separate kingdoms, and under different sovereigns; for in those days, although the English and Scots were almost continually at war, there were no standing forces in either kingdom; but all the men, from sixteen to sixty years of age, were trained to arms, and obliged to provide themselves with armour, offensive and defensive, according to their rank and condition. While so complete a militia was the * national defence, the Lowlanders (especially the southern Scots upon the frontier opposite to England) accustomed to contend with the English, and armed and appointed like the warriors against whom they fought, were so much superior to the Highlanders, that when the kings of Scot-

* The feudal system, civil and military, was introduced into both countries at a very early period. It was established in England soon after the conquest by William the First.—*See* BLACKSTONE'S *Commentaries on the Laws of England,* vol. II. p. 248. As to the time when it was first introduced into Scotland, lawyers and historians differ in opinion.—*See Sir* JOHN DALRYMPLE'S *Essay on Feudal Property.* When the feudal militia went into disuse, the militia by statute succeeded.—*See The Acts of Parliament, from the reign of Robert the Bruce to that of James the Fifth,* vol. II. p. 266. Mr Hume, in his History of England, gives a particular account of the causes which operated that change; of the plan of militia which took place in the beginning of the fourteenth century.

land were at peace with England, and not engaged in war with their own rebellious subjects in the south, they themselves, or their lieutenants, used to march armies of Lowlanders to the utmost extremities of the north to quell the insurrections of the Highlanders, and chastise their unruly chiefs. But when James the Sixth succeeded to the crown of England at the death of Queen Elizabeth, the English and the Scots (that is, the Lowlanders of Scotland) at once laid down their arms, which seemed to be an unnecessary burden, when their ancient enemies had become their fellow-subjects. The untasted pleasures of peace were delicious to both nations; and, during the pacific reign of James, they enjoyed them in perfect security. The militia was totally neglected; and, for a course of years, arms were so little regarded, that when the Civil War broke out in the reign of Charles the First, there were but few arms to be found in the country,* and nobody could use them, without learning a new trade, as recruits for the army do at present.

Meanwhile, the Highlanders continued to be the same sort of people that they had been in former times: Clanship flourished, depredation and

* Three or four hundred men of the king's army marched to the battle of Edge-hill, without any weapon but a cudgel.—CLARENDON, vol. II. p. 40. *Oxford Edition.*

petty war never ceased. Then it was that the Highlanders became superior to the Lowlanders in arms.

The alteration of circumstances, which produced so great a change, does not seem to have been much attended to, nor its effects foreseen, but by the Marquis of Montrose, who, having at last procured the king's commission to command in Scotland, which he had long and earnestly solicited,* set out from Carlisle in the most desperate state of the royal cause, with two gentlemen, (he himself disguised like a servant), and made his way through the Low Country of Scotland to the Highlands, where he erected the king's standard, and with a handful of men began the war, in which he fought and won so many battles, that, as Lord Clarendon expresses it, "he made himself, upon the matter, master of the kingdom."

The victories of Montrose raised the reputation of the Highlanders, and fixed them in the interest of the family of Stuart, † to which they were na-

* See Lord Clarendon's History, vol. II. p. 351 and 460. Bishop Wishart's History of Montrose, p. 18 to p. 36. From these contemporary historians, Mr Hume had selected the circumstances of that succinct and most excellent account of the designs and actions of Montrose, which he gives in his History of England, vol. VII. from p. 43 to p. 51.

† Not all the Highlanders. The Marquis of Argyll, and several other chiefs, joined the Covenanters; but the most war-

turally well inclined; for, ignorant and careless of the disputes, civil and religious, which occasioned the war, Charles the First appeared to them in the light of an injured chief.

At the Restoration, the Highlanders, who had given such proofs of their loyalty to Charles the First, were in great favour with his sons, Charles and James the Second, who looked upon them as the firmest friends of monarchy; and confided in them so much, that at a very critical time,* when there was much discontent in both kingdoms, several thousand Highlanders were brought down to the western counties of Scotland by the ministers of Charles the Second, and employed as a body of troops to enforce the laws against the covenanters.

Soon after the Revolution, the Highlanders took arms against the government of King William. They were commanded by the Viscount Dundee; and, at the battle of Killiecrankie, defeated the king's army, which was greatly superior to them in

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like clans took arms for the king; and since that time, the different clans have generally adhered to the side which they took in the first contest.

* In the year 1678 the Highlanders were quartered upon the people in the western counties. In the year 1679 the Exclusion Bill was brought before the Parliament of England; and the battle of Bothwell-Bridge was fought in Scotland.

number.* Lord Dundee was killed in the battle, and his death may be said to have put an end to the rebellion.

From the year 1689, the Highlanders kept a constant correspondence with James the Second as long as he lived, entreating him to procure from the King of France a body of troops to invade Britain, and engaging to support the invasion by an insurrection.

After the death of James, they continued their correspondence † with his son at St Germain's, at Avignon, at Rome, or wherever he was, soliciting him to procure assistance from France, and assuring him of their readiness to appear in arms.

At the accession of the family of Hanover, the Highlanders took arms against the parliamentary settlement of the crown, though no French troops came to their assistance.

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* To the victory which the Highlanders gained at the battle of Killiecrankie, General M'Kay, who commanded the king's army, ascribes that confidence which the Highlanders had in themselves, as equal or superior to regular troops.

† The correspondence of the Jacobites in Scotland and in England with St Germain's, during the reign of King William and that of Queen Anne, was known in part at the time; but the great extent of it was not fully known till the year 1775, when Macpherson's History of Great Britain was published, with the Stuart papers, from the Revolution to the accession of the family of Hanover.

Louis the Fourteenth was dead* before the Earl of Mar erected his standard in the Highlands; and the Duke of Orleans, regent of France,† never intended to do any thing in favour of the Pretender's cause.

Notwithstanding these disappointments, the Earl of Mar was joined by so many fighting men, that the army he commanded at the battle of Sheriff-muir was greatly superior to the royal army; but the king's troops were commanded by the Duke of Argyll and Greenwich, renowned for valour, and of great experience in arms.

The battle of Sheriff-muir was a drawn battle, for the number of the slain was nearly equal on both sides; and both generals claimed the victory.

This rebellion, at the accession of the House of Hanover, was very soon followed by another, which was part of a plan to restore the family of Stuart, formed by Cardinal Alberoni, minister of Spain. In the year 1719, the King of Spain declared war against England, acknowledged the Pretender as King of Great Britain, and equipped a fleet of

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* Louis the Fourteenth died in the month of August in the year 1715. The Earl of Mar erected his standard in the month of September in the same year.

† The words of Lord Bolingbroke, in his Letter to Sir William Windham, p. 185.

ten ships of the line, with several frigates, to escort a number of transports, having on board 6000 troops and 12,000 stand of arms. While this armament (destined to invade England under the command of the Duke of Ormond) was preparing at Cadiz, the Marquis of Tulibardin, the Earls of Seaforth and Mareschal, with several other persons attainted in the year 1716, landed in the island of Lewes. Most of these persons came privately from France. But the Earl of Mareschal, who came from St Sebastian, brought with him two Spanish frigates, having on board 300 Spanish soldiers, some ammunition, arms, and a sum of money. The Marquis of Tullibardin and his associates remained at the island of Lewes, corresponding with the disaffected chiefs in the Highlands, and engaging them to take arms, when the Duke of Ormond with his troops should land in England. But the Duke of Ormond never did land in England; for the Spanish fleet having sailed from Cadiz, met with a violent storm off Cape Finisterre, which dispersed them completely. Meanwhile, the Marquis of Tullibardin, who had a commission from the Pretender to command in Scotland, left the Island of Lewes with the 300 Spaniards, and came over to the main land of Scotland; but, as every thing remained quiet in England, very few Highlanders joined him. The ministers of George the First,

informed of the intended invasion of England, and of the Spaniards who had landed in the Island of Lewes with the attainted chiefs, had brought over to Britain 2000 men of the Dutch army from Holland, and six battalions of imperial troops from the Austrian Netherlands. The Dutch forces were sent down to Inverness, where General Wightman, commander-in-chief for Scotland, had taken post with some British regiments both of horse and foot. As soon as he was informed that the Spaniards had landed in the Highlands, and that some Highlanders had joined them, he marched with his troops, and the Dutch auxiliaries, into the Highlands, and, coming up with the enemy at Glenshiel, (between Fort Augustus and Bernera,) he attacked them immediately. The engagement, if it may be called so, was a very short one. The Highlanders, favoured by the ground, withdrew to the hills, without having suffered much. The Spaniards laid down their arms, and were made prisoners.

Such had been the state of the Highlands, and the attachment of the greater and more warlike part of the Highlanders to the family of Stuart, from the reign of Charles the First to that of George the Second.

Notwithstanding the frequent rebellions during that long and eventful period, raised by a handful

of men* in a corner of the island, no measures were taken to reconcile them to government, or to enable the other inhabitants of Britain to resist the Highlanders when they thought proper to rebel.

The state of arms in every part of Britain was allowed to remain the same: the Highlanders lived under their chiefs in arms; the people of England, and the Lowlanders of Scotland, lived without arms under their sheriffs and magistrates; so that every rebellion was a war carried on by the Highlanders against the standing army; and a declaration of war with France or Spain, which required the service of the troops abroad, was the signal for a rebellion at home. Strange as it may seem, it was actually so.

Meanwhile, that is, in the interval between one rebellion and another, the arts of peace were successfully cultivated in Britain, and the national wealth was greatly augmented; but of that wealth, no part or portion accrued to the Highland chiefs, who still kept their people upon the old establishment; and, always expecting another rebellion, estimated their consideration by the number of men they could bring to the field.† Of the danger that

* The number of men which the disaffected clans could bring to the field was estimated at 12,000.—*Stuart Papers*, vol. II. p. 117.

† About the year 1740, some low country gentlemen made

was likely to arise from the Highlanders, in case of a foreign war, government was warned by Duncan Forbes of Culloden, President of the Court of Session, who, at the same time, suggested a measure to prevent rebellion and insurrection in the Highlands, by engaging the Highlanders in the service of government. As there will be frequent occasion to mention this gentleman, who, in the course of the rebellion, contributed so much to frustrate the designs of Charles, it seems proper to mention some circumstances, which are known only to the few people still alive, who remember him.

Duncan Forbes, born a younger brother, and bred to the law, had passed through the different offices of that profession which usually lead to the chair, universally esteemed, and thought still worthy of a higher office than the one he held. When called to preside in the Supreme Court of Justice in Scotland, he fully answered the expectations of his countrymen; his manners gave a lustre to the dignity of his station, and no President of the Court of Session was ever more respected and beloved.

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a party to visit the Highlands, where they were entertained at the house of one of the chiefs with great hospitality, and a profusion of game, fish, and French wine. One of the guests asked their landlord somewhat bluntly, What was the rent of his estate; he answered, he could raise 500 men. This story is told of M'Donald of Keppoch, who was killed at the battle of Culloden.

He was a Whig upon principle; that is, he thought the government established at the Revolution was the best form of government for the inhabitants of Britain. In the end of autumn, in the year 1738, he came to Lord Milton's house at Brunstane, one morning before breakfast. Lord Milton was surprised to see him at so early an hour, and asked what was the matter. "A matter," replied the President, "which I hope you will think of some importance. You know very well that I am, like you, a Whig; but I am also the neighbour and friend of the Highlanders, and intimately acquainted with most of their chiefs. For some time, I have been revolving in my mind different schemes for reconciling the Highlanders to government; now I think the time is come to bring forward a scheme, which, in my opinion, will certainly have that effect.

"A war with Spain seems near at hand, which, it is probable, will soon be followed by a war with France; and there will be occasion for more troops than the present standing army. In that event, I propose that government should raise four or five regiments of Highlanders, appointing an English or Scotch officer, of undoubted loyalty, to be colonel of each regiment; and naming the lieutenant-colonels, majors, captains, and subalterns, from this list in my hand, which comprehends all the chiefs and chieftains of the disaffected clans, who are the

very persons whom France and Spain will call upon, in case of a war, to take arms for the Pretender. If government pre-engages the Highlanders in the manner I propose, they will not only serve well against the enemy abroad, but will be hostages for the good behaviour of their relations at home; and I am persuaded that it will be absolutely impossible to raise a rebellion in the Highlands. I have come *here* to shew you this plan, and to entreat, if you approve it, that you will recommend it to your friend Lord Ilay,* who, I am told, is to be here to-day or to-morrow, on his way to London.

"I will most certainly," said Milton, "shew the plan to Lord Ilay; but I need not recommend it to him; for, if I am not much mistaken, it will recommend itself.

Next day, the Earl of Ilay came to Brunstane: Lord Milton shewed him the President's plan, with which he was extremely pleased, and carrying it to London with him, presented it to Sir Robert Walpole, who read the preamble, and said, at once, that

* Archibald Earl of Ilay, who, in the year 1743, succeeded his brother John Duke of Argyll, was the friend of Sir Robert Walpole; and, during the long administration of that minister, had the management of the king's affairs in Scotland committed to him. Lord Milton, Justice-Clerk, was subminister to Lord Ilay.

it was the most sensible plan he had ever seen, and was surprised that nobody had thought of it before.

He then ordered a cabinet council to be summoned, and laid the plan before them, expressing his approbation of it in the strongest terms, and recommending it as a measure which ought to be carried into execution immediately, in case of a war with Spain. Notwithstanding the minister's recommendation, every member of the council declared himself against the measure, assuring Sir Robert Walpole, that for his sake they could not possibly agree to it; that, if government should adopt the plan of the *Scots* judge, the patriots (for so the opposition was called) would exclaim that Sir Robert Walpole, who always designed to subvert the British constitution, was raising an army of Highlanders to join the standing army, and enslave the people of England. The plan was set aside;* and, next year, Britain declared war against Spain.†

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* This account of the President's plan, and of the reason for which it had been rejected, was given to the author of this History by Lord Milton.

† Britain declared war against Spain on the 23d of October, in the year 1739.

CHAPTER II.

Conspiracy to restore the Family of Stuart—Engagement to take Arms—Sent to the Old Pretender—Transmitted by him to Cardinal Fleury.—War at the Death of Charles VI. Emperor of Germany.—The House of Austria attacked—Assisted by Great Britain.—Cardinal Fleury sends an Agent to Edinburgh.—Plan of Invasion.—Death of Cardinal Fleury.—Succeeded by Cardinal de Tencin.—Charles Stuart arrives at Paris —Goes to Dunkirk.—The troops begin to embark.—Design of Invasion frustrated by a Storm.—Charles embarks for Scotland—Lands in the Highlands.

WAR having been declared against Spain, in the year 1739, some of the most zealous Jacobites met at Edinburgh, in the beginning of the year 1740, and, concluding that a Spanish war would certainly bring on a war with France, they framed an association, engaging themselves to take arms, and venture their lives and fortunes to restore the family of Stuart, provided that the King of France would send over a body of troops to their assistance. This association, signed by seven persons* of distinction,

* The seven were Lord Lovat, James Drummond, commonly called Duke of Perth, Lord Traquair, Sir James Campbell

was delivered to Drummond of Bochaldy, (nearly related to Cameron of Lochiel, and several other disaffected chiefs,) to be carried to the Pretender at Rome, whom they entreated to procure assistance from France. Besides the association, Drummond carried with him a list* of those chiefs and chieftains, who, the subscribers thought, were willing and ready to join them, if a body of French troops should land in Britain. With these papers Drummond went to Rome, where the Pretender lived; for, by an article of the treaty of peace made at Utrecht, he had been obliged to quit the dominions of France; and, leaving St Germain's, went to Bar, in Lorraine, from that to Avignon, and at last to Rome. The Pretender having examined the papers, thought the project practicable and well-timed; for the clamour against the government of George the Second, conducted by Sir Robert Walpole, resounded through Europe, and foreigners mistook the outcry of faction and party rage for the voice of disaffection and revolt. To the Pretender and his adherents at Rome, who were very

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of Auchinbreck, Cameron of Lochiel, John Stuart, brother to Lord Traquair, Lord John Drummond, uncle to the Duke of Perth.—*Lord Lovat's Trial*, p. 21.

* The list contains so great a number of names, that Secretary Murray, in his evidence at the bar of the House of Lords, said that he thought it to be rather a general list of the Highlands.—*Lovat's Trial*, p. 21.

willing to believe what they wished, Britain seemed ripe for another revolution; and the papers brought from Scotland by Drummond, were immediately forwarded by the same messenger to Cardinal Fleury at Paris, with the Pretender's approbation of the plan, and a request that his eminence would grant the assistance required. The French minister thought it sufficient to promise that the assistance required should be granted, as soon as the undertakers for an insurrection could shew a reasonable prospect of success. During this correspondence, before any thing was settled with Cardinal Fleury, a general war broke out in Europe at the death of Charles the Sixth,* Emperor of Germany, the last of the male line of the House of Austria. The rise and progress of that war are well known: the House of Austria, divested of the imperial dignity, was attacked in every part of her hereditary dominions by a powerful combination of princes, which she could not have resisted long, if Great Britain, at war with Spain, and upon very ambiguous terms with France, had not interposed in this great quarrel with her money and her arms. The British subsidies† had begun to operate with effect

* Charles the Sixth died in the month of October, in the year 1740.

† A subsidy of L.300,000 was granted by Parliament to the Queen of Hungary in the year 1741, and a subsidy of L.500,000 in the year 1742.—SMOLLET'S *History*, vol. III. chap. vii.

in Germany :* the British troops were preparing to embark for the continent, and some foreign troops in British pay had marched to join the Austrian army, when the minister of France, finding that the designs of his court were counteracted everywhere by this zealous ally of the House of Austria, resolved to call the attention of George the Second and his ministers to their own affairs, by reviving the pretensions of the Stuart family to the crown of Britain.

In the beginning of the month of February 1742, Drummond of Rochaldy, formerly mentioned, came privately to Edinburgh, where he found most of the persons who had signed the association which he had carried to the Pretender at Rome. These conspirators, with the addition of some others, had formed themselves into a society, which they called the Concert of Gentlemen† for managing the king's affairs in Scotland. Drummond assured the members of the concert, that he had been exceedingly well received by Cardinal Fleury, who expressed

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* In the months of April and May in the year 1742, twenty-four regiments of British troops were landed on the Continent.

† Murray of Broughton (afterwards secretary,) and one or two more, who had not signed the association to take arms, which was sent to the old Pretender at Rome in the year 1740, were members of the concert when Drummond of Rochaldy came to Edinburgh from Cardinal Fleury in the year 1742.

much satisfaction with the contents of the papers from Scotland; and had the Pretender's interest so much at heart, that, provided he had the same assurances from the friends of the Stuart family in England, he would send over an army of 13,000 men, of whom 1500 were to be landed in the West Highlands of Scotland, near Fort William, and 1500 on the east coast at Inverness; while the main body, consisting of 10,000 men, under the command of Marshal Saxe, should land with Charles Stuart, the Pretender's† eldest son, as near London as possible.

After this exposition of the cardinal's plan of invasion, Drummond stayed at Edinburgh till Cameron of Lochiel, who had been sent for, came to town, and having acquainted him with every circumstance of the intended invasion, he returned to Paris, and had an audience of the French minister, who (as the members of the concert were informed by Drummond, in a letter to Lord Traquair) was extremely pleased with the account given him of the state of affairs in Scotland, and designed to put the scheme in execution that very year.

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* Cardinal Fleury, or Drummond, seems to have taken for granted, that Charles would come over with the French troops, though it had not been mentioned to his father. In the following year, 1743, Drummond, at the desire of the French court, went to Rome to persuade the Pretender to send his son to France.—*Lord Lovat's Trial*, p. 79.

Nothing, however, was done, or attempted to be done, in the year 1742; and the members of the concert became apprehensive that Cardinal Fleury never intended an invasion, but that Drummond, to keep up the spirit of party in Scotland, and make himself considerable, as the Cardinal's agent for such great affairs, had exceeded his instructions, and laid before the gentlemen of the concert, a plan of invasion, which he knew would please them.

To be certain how matters stood, Murray of Broughton, a member of the concert, was prevailed upon to go to Paris, and learn from the Cardinal himself what he really intended, and what the friends of the Stuart family were to expect from the court of France.

In the beginning of the month of January, Murray left Edinburgh, and in his way to Paris heard that Cardinal Fleury was dead.* This piece of intelligence, he thought, made it still more necessary for him to proceed.

When Murray arrived at Paris, he had an audience of Monsieur Amelot, secretary for foreign affairs, who told him that Cardinal Fleury had delivered to him all the papers relating to the Pretender's business, and had recommended to his suc-

* Cardinal Fleury died in the month of January 1743, in the 90th year of his age.

cessor, Cardinal de Tencin, the execution of his design to restore the family of Stuart: that the King of France was informed of Mr Murray's coming to Paris, and the cause of it; in consequence of which, he had given him orders to assure Mr Murray, that he (the King of France) had the interest of the Stuart family as much at heart as any of those gentlemen who had signed the association; and as soon as an opportunity offered, would certainly put the scheme in execution.

Murray returned immediately to Scotland, and gave his friends an account of the conversation which he had with Monsieur Amelot, whose assurances of the King of France's intention to execute the plan of invasion proved very soon to be true.

As the rebellion which broke out in Scotland in the year 1745 was only a fragment of the original design, it seems not improper to give an account of the attempt to invade Britain, which was made in the beginning of the year 1744; and, if it had not miscarried, would have joined a French army of 15,000 men, commanded by Marshal Saxe, to the forces of all the disaffected chiefs united then, but much divided when Charles Stuart landed in the Highlands, without troops, arms, or money.

In the month of December,* in the year 1743,

* Murray, in his examination before the House of Lords, gives a long and somewhat perplexed account of the manage-

Cardinal de Tencin dispatched a messenger to the young Pretender at Rome, to acquaint him of the preparations made to invade Britain, and desire him to come immediately to Paris. The messenger arrived at Rome, on one of the last days of December; and Charles, giving out that he was going to hunt the boar, as he used to do every season, left Rome very privately, on the 9th of January, and rode post to Genoa, where he embarked in a felucca, and proceeded by Monaco to Antibes.

At Antibes, he got on horseback again, and rode to Paris: there he found Marshal Saxe, and the general officers appointed to serve under him in the expedition to England. As Charles, in his journey from Rome, met with very bad weather, he had been obliged to stop some days at different places; and the British court received information from Antibes, that the Pretender's eldest son had arrived there on his way to Paris. Upon which the

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ment of his party, and the agents from France, in the year 1743. Murray himself, and several others, seem to have been chiefly employed to procure from the Tories in England, the same assurances that had been given to the court of France by the Jacobites in Scotland. But the English Tories were extremely shy, and unwilling to meet or converse on that subject with the persons sent from France or Scotland, and not one Englishman could be persuaded to give the same assurances under his hand and seal, as had been given by the seven original conspirators.—*Lord Lovat's Trial*, p. 26, 27.

Duke of Newcastle wrote to the English resident at the court of France, that he should go to Monsieur Amelot, and acquaint him with the information which the King his master had received concerning the Pretender's eldest son; and that "his Majesty did not doubt, but that, if the accounts were founded, his most Christian Majesty would, pursuant to treaties, give effectual orders that the said person may be obliged forthwith to quit France."

From this letter it is evident that the British court had not the least suspicion that the young Pretender had left Rome at the desire of the French minister, and was on his way to Paris to join Marshal Saxe, and invade Britain with an army under his command. But, in a very few days after the date * of the Duke of Newcastle's letter, a French fleet, of fifteen ships of the line and five frigates, made its appearance in the channel off Torbay. The British ministers were soon informed that this fleet was destined to escort a large body of troops, who were assembled at Lisle, St Omer, Ayre, and Bergues, that they might be ready to march for Dunkirk, where a number of transports were collected to carry them over to Britain. The court and the people of England were greatly alarmed,

* The letter published in the Magazines, and other Registers of that year, is dated February 3, 1743-44.

and not without cause;* for most part of the British troops were in Flanders, the grand fleet of England was in the Mediterranean, and there were only six ships of the line ready for sea, lying at Spithead. Orders were immediately given to fit out and man all the ships of war in the different ports of the Channel. Never were orders better obeyed; for the French fleet having been driven down the channel by a strong gale of easterly wind, before they could get up again, Sir John Norris, with twenty-one ships of the line, and a good many frigates, arrived in the Downs, where he lay watching the motions of the transports at Dunkirk, from the 16th to the 23d of February. That day an English frigate came into the Downs with the signal for seeing an enemy's fleet flying at her mast-head. The English ships unmoored; and, having the tide with them, beat down the Channel against a fresh gale of westerly wind. At four in the afternoon, the English fleet got sight of the French ships lying at anchor near Dungeness; but, as the tide was spent, they also were

* The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended; some suspected persons were taken into custody, and both Houses of Parliament addressed the King to augment his forces by sea and land, in such manner as he should think necessary at this dangerous juncture of affairs.

obliged to come to an anchor. While the two fleets were in this position, Marshal Saxe, who, with the young Pretender, had come to Dunkirk that very day, was embarking his troops as fast as possible. In the evening the wind changed to the east, and blew a storm: the French ships, sensible of their inferiority, as soon as it was dark, cut their cables, and ran down the Channel. During the night, all the ships of the English fleet (two excepted) parted their cables, and drove. Both the fleets were far enough from Dunkirk; and, if the weather had been moderate, Marshal Saxe might have reached England before Sir John Norris could have returned to the Downs. But when the storm rose, it stopped the embarkation; several transports were wrecked, a good many soldiers and seamen perished, and a great quantity of warlike stores were lost. The English fleet returned to the Downs, and the French troops were withdrawn from the coast.

This attempt to invade Britain occasioned the declarations of war made by both nations in the month of March in the year 1744; for though they had been actually at war for some time, and the battle of Dettingen * had been fought, there

* The British troops that landed on the Continent in the year 1742, with 16,000 Hanoverians, and 6,000 Hessians in British pay, joined the Austrian army as allies to the Queen

was no declaration of war till France attempted to invade Britain in favour of the Pretender.

After the long projected design of invasion miscarried, Charles retired to Graveline, where he lived very privately all the summer of the year 1744, calling himself the Chevalier Douglas.

Meanwhile, he solicited the French ministers, by an agent, who was called Lord Semple, to resume their purpose, and fulfil the engagements of Cardinal Fleury. In the beginning of winter, Charles went to Paris to enforce his solicitations; but, not being able to procure any positive assurance of immediate aid, he became extremely impatient, and began to talk among his confidants of going to Scotland without any assistance from France.

About this time Murray of Broughton went to Paris once more, at the desire of his friends in Scotland, who thought, as he says,* that it was absolutely necessary for them to know upon what footing things really were. When Murray came to Paris, he was introduced to Charles, and desired to see him in private, which he did next day, and had a long conversation with him. Charles mentioned the association of the Highland chiefs, and

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of Hungary, and marching into Germany, fought the battle of Dettingen, on the 16th of June, in the year 1743.

† *Murray's Evidence. Lord Lovat's Trial,* pp. 79 and 80.

said he did not doubt that the King of France intended to invade Britain; but that he himself was determined, at all events, to come to Scotland, even without assistance from France. Murray endeavoured to shew him that such an undertaking was desperate; and assured him, that, if he came to the Highlands without a body of regular troops, very few people would join him. Notwithstanding Murray's arguments, Charles insisted upon going to Scotland. When Murray returned to Edinburgh, he gave his friends an account of his conference with Charles; and all of them (the Duke of Perth excepted) declared against the design of coming to Scotland without assistance from France. Upon which Murray wrote a letter to Charles, acquainting him with the opinion of his friends, and setting forth the bad consequences of such an undertaking. This letter was sent off in the month of January, in the year 1745; but, as the safe conveyance of treasonable letters is very difficult, Charles never received the letter; and it was returned to Murray * in the month of April.

Matters continued in this state of fluctuation and uncertainty till the beginning of the month of May, 1745, when an event happened which determined Charles to proceed. That event was the

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* *Lord Lovat's Trial*, p. 80.

battleo Fontenoy, (May 11th, N. S.) where the British troops, behaving with incomparable valour, were overpowered by numbers, and cut in pieces. Fame did not diminish the havoc of that day; and Charles concluding, that, from an army so much weakened, and still pressed by Count Saxe, no troops could be spared to oppose his progress in Britain, resolved to embrace so favourable an opportunity of trying what he could do in a country where he believed he had many friends, and no formidable enemies but the regular troops, whose number he knew was inconsiderable.

When the French ministers were made acquainted with this peremptory resolution, they did not choose to commit themselves, by appearing openly to aid and abet an enterprize which they were not prepared to support. But, willing to procure a diversion in favour of their master's arms, they contrived, in a very underhand and indirect manner, to enable Charles to leave France as he did. There happened to be then in Paris two merchants named Ruttledge and Walch, both of Irish extraction, the sons of refugees, who had followed the fortune of James the Second. Ruttledge was settled at Dunkirk, and Walch at Nantes. They made some money before the war began, by trading to the West Indies; but when war was declared between France and Britain, they became adventurers in privateering, and had

been concerned in several armaments. Still extending their views and operations, they had obtained from the court of France, a grant of an old man-of-war of 60 guns, called the Elizabeth : they had purchased a frigate of 16 guns, called the Doutelle, and were equipping these vessels for a cruize in the north seas, to intercept some of the valuable ships, that, in time of war, came north about to England. Lord Clare, a lieutenant-general in the service of France, (afterwards Marshal Thomond,) was acquainted with these gentlemen, and knew the state of their armament; he introduced them to Charles Stuart, and proposed that they should lend their ships to him, for a more splendid expedition, and carry their Prince to Scotland. The two Irishmen not only agreed to lend him their ships, but engaged to furnish him with all the money and arms they could procure. Lord Clare undertook to raise 100 marines, which he did, and put them on board the Elizabeth. When every thing was ready, Charles came from Paris to Nantes; and, on the 20th of June, leaving Nantes in a fishing boat, went aboard the Doutelle, at St Nazaire, and was joined by the Elizabeth, near Belleisle. In the two ships were about 2000 muskets, and five or six hundred French broad-swords. Charles had with him in the Doutelle, which was commanded by Walch, a sum of money, somewhat

less than 4000l.* Such were the preparations made for an expedition, which it was easy to keep secret, for nobody could possibly believe that it was intended against the government of Britain.

The course which the seamen proposed to steer for the Highlands of Scotland, was by the Æbudæ, or Western Isles. They had not proceeded far in their voyage, when they met an English man-of-war of 60 guns, called the Lyon, commanded by Captain Brett (afterwards Sir Percy.) The Lyon and Elizabeth engaged; and, after a very obstinate fight, the two vessels separated, both greatly disabled: the Elizabeth was so much shattered, that with difficulty she regained the port whence she came. Charles, in the Doutelle, pursued his course. As he approached the coast of Scotland, another large ship (which was supposed to be an English man-of-war) appeared between his vessel and the land; the Doutelle (then off the south end of the Long Island) changed her course, and ranging along the east side of Barra, came to an anchor between South Uist and Erisca, which is the largest of a cluster of small rocky islands that lie off South

* The sum of money furnished by Walch and Ruttledge to Charles, was 3800l. which the old Pretender repaid some years after by a bill drawn upon John Haliburton, at Dunkirk, in favour of Ruttledge.

Uist. Charles immediately went ashore on Erisca. His attendants giving out that he was a young Irish priest, conducted him to the house of the tacksman who rented all the small islands; of him they learned that Clanronald and his brother Boisdale were upon the Island of South Uist; that young Clanronald was at Moidart upon the main land. A messenger was immediately dispatched to Boisdale, who is said to have had great influence with his brother. Charles stayed all night on the island of Erisca, and, in the morning, returned to his ship. Boisdale came aboard soon after: Charles proposed that he should go with him to the main land, assist in engaging his nephew to take arms, and then go, as his ambassador, to Sir Alexander Macdonald and Macleod. To every one of these proposals Boisdale gave a flat negative, declaring that he would do his utmost to prevent his brother and his nephew from engaging in so desperate an enterprize; assuring Charles, that it was needless to send anybody to Skye, for that he had seen Sir Alexander Macdonald and Macleod very lately, and was desired by them to acquaint him, if he should come to South Uist, in his way to the Highlands, that they were determined not to join him, unless he brought over with him a body of regular troops. Charles replied in the best manner he could; and

ordering the ship to be unmoored, carried Boisdale, whose boat hung at the stern, several miles onward to the main land, pressing him to relent, and give a better answer. Boisdale was inexorable; and getting into his boat, left Charles to pursue his course, which he did directly for the coast of Scotland; and coming to an anchor in the Bay of Lochnanuagh, between Moidart and Arisaig, sent a boat ashore with a letter to young Clanronald. In a very little time Clanronald, with his relation Kinloch Moidart, came aboard the Doutelle. Charles, almost reduced to despair in his interview with Boisdale, addressed the two Highlanders with great emotion, and summing up his arguments for taking arms, conjured them to assist their prince, their countryman, in his utmost need. Clanronald and his friend, though well inclined to the cause, positively refused; and told him, one after another, that, to take arms without concert or support, was to pull down certain destruction on their own heads. Charles persisted, argued, and implored. During this conversation, the parties walked backwards and forwards upon the deck; a Highlander stood near them, armed at all points, as was then the fashion of the country: he was a younger brother of Kinloch Moidart, and had come off to the ship to inquire for news, not knowing who was aboard. When he gathered, from their discourse,

that the stranger was the Prince of Wales; when he heard his chief and his brother refuse to take arms with their prince, his colour went and came, his eyes sparkled, he shifted his place, and grasped his sword. Charles observed his demeanour, and, turning briskly towards him, called out, "Will not you assist me?"—"I will, I will," said Ranald; "though no other man in the Highlands should draw a sword, I am ready to die for you." Charles, with a profusion of thanks and acknowledgments, extolled his champion to the skies, saying, he only wished that all the Highlanders were like him. Without farther deliberation, the two Macdonalds declared that they also would join, and use their utmost endeavours to engage their countrymen to take arms. Immediately Charles with his company went ashore, and was conducted to Boradale, a farm which belonged to the estate of Clanronald. The persons who landed with Charles at Boradale on the 25th of July, were the Marquis of Tullibardine, elder brother of James Duke of Atholl, who had been attainted in the year 1716; Sir Thomas Sheridan, who had been tutor to Charles; Sir John Macdonald, an officer in the Spanish service; Francis Strickland, an English gentleman; Kelly, a clergyman, who had been sent to the Tower of London for his concern in the Bishop of Rochester's plot; Æneas Macdonald, a

banker in Paris, who was Kinloch Moidart's brother; and Buchanan, the messenger, sent to Rome by Cardinal De Tencin.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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